

# Universität Erfurt

## **Wake-Up Calls: Sleep Discipline and Its Subject/s.**

A Study in Ideology Critique,  
the Critique of Religion and Cultural Criticism

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## Abstract

Methods of controlling and subjecting actually and potentially dormant bodies can be analysed as sleep disciplines. This study is concerned with the ways in which this type of discipline has worked as ideology by subjecting its addressees, with God, the ever wakeful, as ultimate Subject. Aspects of sleep discipline as ideology are traced in religious discourses, which are reconstructed as a series of wake-up calls. These are systematised here as biblical, anthropological and ascetic calls. They are not mutually exclusive but highlight different facets of Christian sleep discipline. Contemporary discourses on sleep, whether religious or not, still interpellate their sleeping and waking addressees as subjects. This has also been done by material culture. Contemporary fiction has much more to say about dystopian sleep than about alternative hopes for a sleep utopia. Yet, it may be precisely in the sense of negatively preserving the utopian imagination that we can momentarily imagine ourselves beyond what ideological sleep disciplines have done to our and our forebears' bodies.

Keywords: Christianity; critique of religion; discipline; ideology; sleep; sociology; sociology of religion

## Zusammenfassung

Methoden der Kontrolle und Unterwerfung aktuell und potentiell schlafender Körper können als Schlafdisziplinen analysiert werden. Diese Studie behandelt Weisen, in denen dieser Typ der Disziplin als Ideologie wirkt, indem er seine AdressatInnen unterwirft und als wachsame Subjekte konstituiert, wobei Gott als der stets Wachende das äusserste Subjekt darstellt. Aspekte von Schlafdisziplin als Ideologie werden in religiösen Diskursen entdeckt, die als eine Reihe von Weckrufen rekonstruiert werden. Diese werden hier systematisiert als biblische, anthropologische und asketische Weckrufe, die sich zwar nicht gegenseitig ausschliessen, aber unterschiedliche Facetten christlicher Schlafdisziplin beleuchten. Auch gegenwärtige Diskurse, ob religiös oder nicht-religiös bestimmt, interpellieren ihre schlafenden und wachenden AdressatInnen als Subjekte. Materielle Kultur hat dies ebenfalls unternommen. Gegenwartsliteratur weiss mehr über dystopischen Schlaf zu sagen als über alternative Hoffnungen auf eine Utopie des Schlafs. Es mag jedoch gerade in der negativen Erhaltung der utopischen Fantasie die Möglichkeit liegen, dass wir uns selbst punktuell jenseits dessen vorstellen können, was ideologische Schlafdisziplinen unseren und den Körpern unserer VorfahrInnen angetan haben und antun.

Schlagwörter: Christentum; Disziplin; Ideologie; Religionskritik; Religionssoziologie; Schlaf; Soziologie

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## 1 First Call

This call and the following ones are concerned with the state in which we spend roughly a third of our lifetime: sleep. It seems that this simple fact has been only recently discovered by sociologists and others in the realm of cultural and social studies. Ironically, the continuous stating and re-stating of this fact of life has already become a topos of thinking and writing about sleep. It serves a legitimising purpose: After all, how could something that takes up such a substantial proportion of our everyday lives have been neglected, if not forgotten, by those in academia who deal with the ways in which we make sense of ourselves and others? Surely, there must be some hidden truths to be uncovered about sleep and the unwillingness, or at least hesitation, to engage with it.

While I agree with the necessity to take sleep seriously, this study is not so much about sleep as such. To simplify matters, it is much more about our lack of sleep. It is concerned with the question how sleep is and has become a sting in the flesh, a potentially unruly force that needs to be domesticated and regulated, something, in short, that we need to work on. Basically, this includes working on our actually and potentially sleeping bodies. These bodies are not doing a lot in the sense of social action, brain activity and lucid dreaming notwithstanding. And yet, we use 'to sleep' as a verb, a trick played on us by language as well as a trick we use on ourselves and each other when thinking and talking of 'sleeping'.

A similar trick seems to be at work in those who immediately think of dreams and dreaming when confronted with the topic of sleep. At least there is something we 'do' in our sleep. Yet, this obsession with action is to be questioned. Such questioning provides the reason why this study is not concerned with dreams. It insists on the empirical distinction between sleep and dreams (Taylor 1993: 465) and concentrates on the former. This state of being is and has been throughout the centuries a provocation to purposive, active and productive minds and bodies. Therefore it deserves to be treated in its own right, without sailing straightaway into the waters of dreamland that appear to be calmer and more comfortable to the restless subjects we have become and made ourselves to be.

The general direction of my inquiry into sleep disciplines is indicated by the main title: *Wake-Up Calls*. This is to clarify that in the contexts I am interested in sleep is –

more or less – always seen in its relation to its other: waking, so much so that waking is the priority from the perspective of which sleep appears as its other. The function of wake-up calls is to raise people from slumber, on the one hand in a literal or physical sense and on the other hand in a metaphorical or symbolic sense. These two senses or levels of meaning have often been interwoven in the history of wake-up calls and sleep discipline/s. This type of discipline has produced its own wake-up calls, and it is these I am interested in.

We are familiar with wake-up calls, whether they are the calls we order when staying at a hotel to make sure we get up in time for this important meeting the next day, or the more metaphorical sort of wake-up calls issued regularly by politicians and activists as part of their rhetorical repertoires. Calls urging us to action are also elements of the auditory landscape at airports: There we have the boarding-calls telling us to proceed to the gate, especially pressing when what we hear is the ‘last and final call’ for our flight. While this type of call does not necessarily find us in a sleeping condition, the expectation to respond by doing something, doing the right thing, is the same as in the wake-up calls made to ensure we leave slumber behind and get up.

Trivial as these examples may seem, there is a systematic interest underneath my insistence on ‘Wake-Up Calls’, and this is tied up with what this study is meant to contribute to in the first place, ideology critique. It is French Marxist Louis Althusser<sup>1</sup>’s (1918-1990) concept of interpellation as the operating procedure of ideology: The call that never misses his man [or woman], who is hailed as a subject. By using Althusser’s model as a heuristic device, I want to explore the ways in which wake-up calls – discursive constructs of wakefulness and alertness – have produced compliant subjects. In explaining his theory of ideology, Althusser drew extensively on religious (Christian) ideology with its ultimate Subject, God. This is how the ‘Subject/s’ in my subheading

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<sup>1</sup> Among other accusations, Althusser’s position has been criticised for its functionalism. This objection has been phrased in a variety of ways. Here is just one example: “In striking similarity with the sociology of Comte or Durkheim, ideology is characterised as maintaining social cohesion. This functionalist conception regards ideology, like culture, as *something* to which we are passively subjected: there is little suggestion that it is possible to transform ideological consciousness. This functionalism is particularly apparent in the notion of interpellation. The subject is seen as unproblematically responding in an identical way when hailed by a whole series of larger Subjects, including the family, law, religion and education. On the contrary, the relationship of an individual to these various institutions must be the site of a complex array of contradictions and struggles” (McDonnell/Robins, 1980: 166; It., Or.). Instead of ‘transforming’ an ideology, Althusser aims at a different type of ideology, the revolutionary proletarian one which admits its own ideological character. McDonnell and Robins’ critique takes Althusser’s model of interpellation as if it was an empirical description of a situation and thus completely neglects the typical or even archetypal status of the model. Finally, with their verdict they do not specify reasons for why individual-institutions relations ‘must’ be conflictive in the way that they apparently would like to see them to be.

is meant to be read: the Subject of Christian sleep discipline is God, yet the subjects are the interpellated individuals, those receiving the wake-up calls. Besides the religious ideology of the Ideological State Apparatus Church with its God, there are other ideologies that fill the place of the ultimate Subject differently and that depend on and reinforce a specific Ideological State Apparatus, such as the School. In Althusser's view the School has replaced the Church in many respects and become the dominant Ideological State Apparatus. Its and the other ISAs' function is to support the repressive State Apparatus and ensure the reproduction of the existing relations of production. With all different ideologies, the basic structure of interpellation, a religious model, remains the same. This is the point where ideology critique and the critique of religion intersect in this book.

By reading Althusser together with another Frenchman, post-structuralist Michel Foucault (1926-1984), I intend to show how this interpellative structure has taken shape historically in forms of discipline. As such, this is a project with a strongly historical dimension, a dimension not too prominent in certain quarters of the sociology of religion. In his 2006 Presidential Address to the Association for the Sociology of Religion, Kevin J. Christiano (2008) has pleaded for a rediscovery of historical thinking in the subdiscipline. While this speech relates mostly to a US American context, a pre-occupation with the present and a forgetfulness of the past can be detected in other national research contexts with a vibrant sociology of religion as well, for instance in the United Kingdom. For my interest in the ways and workings of sleep discipline, this historical dimension is crucial: The contemporary individual watching his/her sleep-waking cycle in order to stay or become fit, healthy and productive and the not only historical (after all, there still is monastic life) monk awake to pray, work and serve God – both are exemplary in that they make use of methods that I propose to call sleep discipline/s and both are interpellated by wake-up calls making them useful subjects. They are so still, even if they do not feel interpellated by the Subject God (anymore). Health, Productivity and various derivatives of them may occupy the position in the educational, family, communications and cultural Ideological State Apparatuses, the position that belongs to God in the religious, or more specifically Christian Ideological State Apparatus, the Church. Irrespective of our views on a decline or resurgence of religion, on secularisation and/or (re-)sacralisation, we can use the idea of sleep ideology interpellating subjects and creating sleep disciplines to explore what does not meet the eye in contemporary culture and its ways



of instrumentalising sleep, even where it is celebrating or fetishising it. This is why this study is also an exercise in cultural criticism.

Sleep disciplines are, after all, historical phenomena. If we can only define that which does not have a history (Adorno, 2000: 29)<sup>2</sup>, then it is, strictly speaking, impossible to give any definition of sleep discipline/s. However, Foucault's concept of discipline (Foucault 1975) can be fruitfully applied to sleep. This is, to refer to Ivan Strenski's (1998) recent distinction not the 'Final Foucault' with his interest in the care of the self, but the 'First Foucault' with his emphasis on discipline. Contrary to Strenski's view, I think it is high time to take into account the earlier focus for studying religion from a critical perspective. On the other hand, some interpreters have felt that the distance between 'First' and 'Final' Foucault is not that great, as they refuse to see his later theoretical involvements as a farewell from the analytics of power and rather view the interest in technologies of the self and subjectivity as a new twist to it (e.g. Lemke 1997).

Unlike many others in the field, I do not think that the sociology of religion has or even should try to overcome the critique of religion. It seems that a great deal of energy in the subdiscipline has been expended on this project (s. Tyrell 1995) – so much so that the project of sociology of religion has indeed developed away from and independently of the critique of religion. My view is that it is here that we need to break the habit of ancestor worship in the subdiscipline and rediscover the critique of religion, to make us better students of both religion and society.

As for discipline, Max Weber rooted its historical emergence in the army<sup>3</sup>, but he also stressed the disciplinary function of the business enterprise with its calculating rationality as a universal, growing phenomenon reducing the social significance of charisma and individualised action (Weber, 2002b: IX: 5: § 3). While it is illuminating to study the ways in which institutions have used disciplines, it is worth emphasising that they are first and foremost bodily phenomena. For Foucault (1975: 161) disciplines were methods that facilitated the control of the body and its subjection to docility and utility. He acknowledged that disciplinary procedures had already existed in monasteries and other places before disciplines proper came to the fore as general forms of domination in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in penal reform and

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<sup>2</sup> Adorno adopted this argument from Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), whose thought on history would also come to be taken up by Michel Foucault later.

<sup>3</sup> For a study of different historical facets of military discipline, see: Bröckling 1997.

the 'birth of the prison'. Foucault held that discipline manufactures the docile bodies of individuals. Disciplines are products of power and knowledge; they reinforce and imply each other as power/knowledge, a motif continued in the first volume of Foucault's (1976) history of sexuality. Although Foucault (1975) found in ascetic and monastic disciplines an orientation towards renunciation rather than utility and towards mastering one's body rather than listening to others, I think that the differences in emphasis are relative ones and often compatible with one another. We can still build on Foucault by approaching sleep disciplines as methods of controlling and subjecting – both potentially and actually – sleeping bodies.

Disciplines such as these have preceded the macro-type of what has been called disciplinary society, and they have been at work in the pastoral power of the Church. However, sleep disciplines figure in still other societal types of power, such as bio-power, whose attempt at administering biological life to optimise it Foucault traced to the eighteenth and especially the nineteenth centuries. Disciplines or an anatomo-politics of the human body and regulatory control or a bio-politics of the population are the two poles between which power over life has been organised (Foucault, 1976: 183). Disciplines also figure in normalising power or disciplinary normalisation/normation that starts out from the norm and then proceeds to model individuals, gestures and acts thus producing the divide between normals and abnormals. Already in the sixteenth century, when the notion of government and the ways to govern a population became major concerns, developing disciplines was a necessity. In his lectures on governmentality, Foucault (2007) described Christian pastoral, with diplomatic and military technique and the police, as one of the tags that facilitated the governmentalisation of the occidental state. This pastoral power was based on the idea of God as pastor or shepherd to his flock, a 'multitude in motion' as represented by people of Israel on the move. It is a beneficent form of power aimed at the flock's well-being or salvation through caring for and watching over them. The pastor is the one who wakes and watches to avert misery. His is an individualising power, too: The shepherd counts his sheep; he serves all and each one of them. The Christian church has spread this, its own unique, model of pastoral power, and through this occidental humans have learned to view themselves as sheep among sheep, asking for salvation from the pastor, who is sacrificing himself for him [and her]. While Foucault suggests an end of the pastoral age in the eighteenth century, he thinks that pastoral power is something we have not liberated ourselves from yet. The pastorate,

institutionalised as Christian from the third century onwards, was an ‘art of governing humans’, related to salvation gained through the pastor, the law set out by the pastor, and the truth taught by the pastor. His responsibility is analytical and includes giving accounts of each one of the sheep. He identifies with them by having all the good and evil related to each sheep transferred to him and his own record. To save them he has to die, and thus he also saves himself. His weaknesses and faults may help the sheep if he admits them. Pastoral power cultivates pure obedience, obedience for its own sake. Interestingly, Foucault counts ascetic practices among the anti-pastoral ones; the ascetic exercise tending to excess evades the grip of pastoral power and challenges it. However, we can say that pastoral power has sought to incorporate ascetic practices. It individualises, subjects and subjectivates – and by doing so it comes close to Althusser’s concept of ideology. It does so, in spite of the fact that Foucault distanced himself from ideology critique: Its positing a material base of practices distinct from a superstructure of immaterial ideas, its binary opposition between science and ideology, and its insistence on the primacy of consciousness were his points of critique (Lemke, 1997: 91 et seq.). Althusser’s concept of ideology, however, is – with the exception of the second point – hardly refuted by this critique of ideology critique.

Disciplines, for all that we know, will continue to work and play a role in new, emergent types of power as well. Just as much as disciplines as practices have been and will be present, so different types of sleep-disciplined bodies have been and will be: Many more than the medieval body, the Protestant modern body and the baroque modern body, (ideal) types the re-formations of which Mellor/Shilling (1997) have schematised.

Foucault came to admit the lasting significance of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory and its endeavour to analyse the effects of power combined with rationality (Foucault, 1996: 80 et seqq.). He conceded that he ought to have read and understood them earlier to save himself both unnecessary work and mistakes. Yet, he also questioned the Critical Theorists’ reliance on a classical concept of the subject, a concept influenced by Marxist humanism, and their lack in historical research. Althusser’s concept of the interpellated subject differs from the humanist tradition, and the historical dimension is, in the sense of a history of the present, what informs this study. Of course, some may object to this approach that Althusser and history do

not go together.<sup>4</sup> Anyhow, beyond the confines of philosophical speculation and historiographical correctness, the sociological imagination may very well draw on both theory and history.

For our analytical purposes we can employ John Fiske's (1993: 17) characterisation of discipline:

"Discipline systematically works to emphasize its effective and benign productivity while disguising its repression, so a disciplined social formation or a disciplined body is one that complies with the system which controls it because it has been persuaded that its benefits are greater than its costs, that what it includes is better than what is excluded."

What this quotation clarifies is the instrumental rationality driving discipline. Applying this to the specific case of sleep discipline, we are able to discern how certain means – a bed or a particular type of mattress, for instance – are used to achieve a certain end, i.e. a well-rested subject. The significance of calculation, part and parcel of rationalisation, is manifested in ideals of sleep duration which state a certain number of hours required to get the desired result. The seemingly autonomising shift towards individualisation, evident in advice that tells us to find our own sleep rhythms etc., hardly breaks away from disciplinary rationality: Now the burden of finding the proper means to achieve the end of being a well-rested, healthy and productive subject lies with the individuals themselves. Self-discipline is what is required of them. Rather than pondering the abstract question of whether opting out of this scheme is possible at all, it makes sense to reflect on the incentives, or what individuals may perceive as such, for disciplining their sleeping and waking bodies:

"A disciplined person is one who submits him- or herself to the power of a particular way of knowing/behaving in order to participate in that power, to become more effective in applying it and thus to gain the satisfaction and rewards that it offers" (Fiske, 1993: 64).

Of course, feeling oneself to be a well-rested, productive and healthy individual is a satisfying experience; being able to participate in the power of the wakeful has an empowering effect. Furthermore, one is not restricted to a single form of sleep

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<sup>4</sup> After all, it was a historian who launched the probably most famous attack on Althusser and his 'theoreticism', E. P. Thompson (1978).

discipline – except for one’s own, if we believe the sleep researchers who tell us to stick with it –; there is a plurality of disciplines to choose from.

Throughout this text, singular, plural and singular-plural forms of a noun are used: sleep discipline, sleep disciplines and sleep discipline/s. The singular use conveys the idea that sleep discipline can be constructed as a coherent whole, the plural use stresses the manifold ways of sleep discipline, and the singular-plural form invites us to think the mediation of these two aspects. Speaking of disciplines in the plural stresses the discontinuities between the individual stages sketched out here, speaking of discipline in the singular aims at a – however hidden – continuity. The “field of entangled and confused parchments, ... documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times” (Foucault, 1991: 76) is the field on which genealogy, intent on tracing the descent rather than origin, operates. In a different context, genealogy, a much discussed and contested<sup>5</sup> concept, has been described as “a way of working back from our present to the contingencies that have come together to give us our certainties” (Asad, 2003: 16). In this sense the present study can be understood as a genealogical one. At the same time, my insistence on ideology and its critique delimits the applicability of this description and of the objections to genealogy.

Sensitive to differences, the chapters making up this text nevertheless develop a theme of continuity, the continuity of sleep ideology and the practical coercion of the sleeper. As his/her sleep has been broken throughout the centuries, the stories told here and the stages presented have to be broken in character as well. My overall interest is in presenting a negative critique. This approach does not aim at spelling out a fully-fledged alternative world of sleep nor, and even less so, is it to be read as the construction of a social technology optimising the uses and abuses of sleepers. To such endeavours it will not lend any help. It can only point towards a utopian horizon, the non-place where sleep would have a place – without fleshing out a new utopia, as doing so would put an end to utopia.

In terms of locating my project as far as academic fields are concerned, the core of the argument is situated in the sociology of religion. Since the argument is a historical one, it calls for a historical sociology of religion. The historical interest of this study is driven by an interest in the present. The problems of the present – the rejection

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<sup>5</sup> To name just one representative of the critics, I mention Jürgen Habermas (1992) and his reservations against the methodology of Foucauldian genealogy: Its presentism, relativism, krypto-normativism and subjectivism. For a view of Habermas’s and Foucault’s positions as complementary rather than incompatible in terms of social critique, see: Ingram 2005.

and/or instrumentalisation of sleep due to a focus on productive or consumptive action – call for problematising the past. The problems of the present also need to be treated in their own right from a contemporary perspective. This is where the sociology of the body and recent sociological work on sleep come into play, the perspectives of which are examined in order to conceive of the present state of sleep as a social phenomenon. In this field the most interesting literature, little as it is so far, is to be found, literature that is of direct concern to the framing of my topic. Sociologists of religion, whose outlook often differs markedly from the one of those working in general sociology, seem to be very much in unison with the latter in this case, or rather: both are united in their speechlessness on the subject.

In a sense, sleep discipline is basic to discipline/s as such. The other disciplines could not be without it, while it is itself also dependent on the others; eating, for example, and the rationing of food in disciplines of dieting (Turner 1996). Historically, religion was one of the crucial institutions to show us how to discipline ourselves (or our Puritan or monastic *alter egos*) and provided us with certain reasons for doing so, thus producing certain knowledge, i.e. a specific type of knowledge as well as the certainty of those who know. Depending on one's point of view this can either be welcomed as religion's great contribution to a normatively interpreted civilising process or deplored as a shortcoming of critique of religion which has managed to get us rid of religious motivations but has not succeeded in abolishing the structural functioning and coercive effects of acquired practices. Due to the critical framework of this project, the latter will be argued for. This is also an argument for the abiding power of ideology: Although the fate of religious ideology is at least debatable, the hailing of the subject in and by ideology can be studied in and through Christian wake-up calls.

If, with Nietzsche (1997, V: 218 et seq.), we can distinguish between a way of life that serves as a *disciplina voluntatis* and its interpretation by the founders of religions, departing from Nietzsche, we suggest to focus on the first, not the latter. While he stressed the significance of the interpretive effort of ascribing a particular, unique value to a way of life that may have existed beforehand and alongside other such ways, we are interested in the continuing material practices. The fact that seemingly identical practices can be pursued for a myriad of different reasons and motivations, forms thus one of the starting points of this inquiry.

The sleeper is in a specific sense inaccessible to ethics, which may account for the multifarious ethical appeals to wake up, appeals made on a metaphorical as well as on

a literal level of meaning. The sleeper's inaccessibility is far from having led ethics to exclude sleep from its considerations: Since nobody sleeps all of the time, pre- and post-sleeping subjects can still be appealed to, in order to shorten the time in which they cannot be. These thoughts on the challenge and limits of sleep as a candidate for an ethics bring to mind, once again, a certain concept of ideology, Louis Althusser's. The idea of the interpellation or hailing of an individual who recognises that it is 'really' him/her (bearing the caveat on gender in mind) who is being addressed and by this very act of recognition becomes a subject, at least in theoretical reconstruction, points out the function of ideology (Althusser 1971: 174):

"I shall then suggest that ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!'"

Althusser chose to point out Christian religious ideology as an example of ideology: Its calling the subject by his name, "Peter", its telling him that God exists and speaks through it, that "You" have been created by 'Him', what your place in the world is, and what "You" have got to do in order to be saved. This religious ideology announces the subject's freedom to follow the call, that is: to heed the Subject's commandments. For Althusser, ideology represents imaginary<sup>6</sup> relations and has a material existence. Both qualities remind Roland Boer (2007: 480) of the theological categories of belief and practice, especially the Roman Catholic predilection for rituals. Only recently has it been noted that Althusser's work merits the attention of those studying religion (e.g. Nye 2008, who nevertheless charges him with Eurocentrism)<sup>7</sup>. The French philosopher's work alerts [!] us to "the ways specific religious discourses (liturgies and other rituals, preaching, scriptures) function to interpellate or 'recruit' its subjects into a particular ideological framework" (Deal/Beal, 2004: 30). In this perspective, Althusser's concepts can be thought with "to analyze the power of a religious

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<sup>6</sup> Althusser's borrowing from and misreading of Lacan has been a matter of debate. David Macey (1994: 148) explains this for the mirror-stage, in which the child recognises its own image in a mirror as the same time as representing an imaginary other and thus alienation and misrecognition. Althusser's model of ideology differs from the Lacanian foil in several respects, to quote just one: "The subject of Lacan's mirror-stage does not recognize himself through the verbal interpellation of an other; he (mis-) recognizes himself in an image of the self as other" (Op. cit.: 150).

<sup>7</sup> For an earlier attempt to make Althusser fruitful for the sociology of religion from a Durkheimian-Marxist perspective see: Thompson, K. 1986.

discourse ... to construct an individual's subjectivity according to a larger ideological structure" (Ibd.).<sup>8</sup>

Even if we take ours to be a by-and-large secularised society or a 'secular age' (Taylor 2007), in which belief in God has become optional, we do not live without traditions. Some of those may weigh on us like a nightmarish burden, to paraphrase Karl Marx (1960). It is in this context, in the *18<sup>th</sup> Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, that he wrote the by now classic statement according to which human beings make history, their own history, but that they do so under conditions not of their own choosing. These conditions have been formed in the past and still exert an influence on the present. This idea is applicable to sleep discipline/s. Not only that: It can also be applied to that what is disciplined, sleep itself, and thus practically, of course, the sleeper and his/her body. Marx's statement encourages us to theorise about body techniques of sleeping as social constructions of a biological need. Yet, what we are more specifically concerned with are disciplinary techniques. This is also why the recent introduction of 'body pedagogics' (Shilling/Mellor 2007) as means through which body techniques are transmitted, the associated experiences and embodied changes does not satisfy our theoretical curiosity. While a 'sleep pedagogics' would be an affirmative concept (in practice, particularly in so far as religious and more particularly in so far as Christian pedagogics is recognised as (ideal)type), 'sleep discipline', as I propose to understand it, is a critical tool. In this critical vein, present-day constructions of sleep needs and the disciplinary subtexts of these discourses will concern us in terms of debates about an 'unslept' society and instrumentalisations of sleep.

'Secularisation'<sup>9</sup> is one of the most contested concepts in the sociology of religion, and the academic neophyte is sure to enter a minefield when employing it. While I do not think – as Marx did – that the criticism of religion has been 'essentially' completed, neither for Germany nor for many other places in this world, I feel that 'secularisation'

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<sup>8</sup> In spite of all conceptual differences, there are some resemblances between this theory of religious ideology and Foucault's notion of pastoral power referred to above, most of all the individualising effects grasped by both. A notable difference, though, is marked by the absence in Althusser where Foucault has a presence, the presence of the pastor, "who can require the people to do everything that they must for their salvation, and who is in a position to *watch over them* and to exercise with respect to them, in any case a surveillance and continuous control" (Foucault [1978] in: Carrette, 1999: 115-130).

<sup>9</sup> For an attempt at a genealogy of the genealogical category of secularisation and the process it is meant to denote, see: Marramao 1996. This work emphasises the meanings of the category in the philosophy of history, a field that is beyond the scope and intent of this study.



as the social construction<sup>10</sup> of an empirical fact is, in a limited sense, good to think with. This thinking allows us to interpret the changes that have occurred in sleep disciplines, while at the same time being aware of the constructed character of such interpretations. I would like to refer to the third aspect of secularisation as a social condition explained by Steve Bruce (2002: 3), whose claims are definitely stronger than the constructionist ones:

“a social condition manifest in (a) the declining importance of religion for the operation of non-religious roles and institutions such as those of the state and the economy; (b) a decline in the social standing of religious roles and institutions; and (c) *a decline in the extent to which people engage in religious practices, display beliefs of a religious kind, and conduct other aspects of their lives in a manner informed by such beliefs*” (It., AF).

That the extent to which people conduct their sleep lives in a manner informed by religious beliefs has declined is the thesis I hold to be true at least for the societies within my, by necessity restricted, reach. This is not a universal statement and not to subscribe to any teleological notion of ‘secularisation’ informed by certain types of philosophy of history. More specifically, I am concerned with the third subset under c) of manifestations of secularisation à la Bruce: It is not necessarily a claim about a decline in religious practices or beliefs. My concern is with sleep as one of the “other aspects” of life, and that by-and-large the way this aspect is lived is not informed by religious beliefs.

A historical point of view asks for careful distinctions, such as the one between ‘Christianity’ and ‘Christendom’ (McLeod, 2003: 2). The book title *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750-2000*, echoes and picks up on a theme represented by Peter Brown’s (1996) *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity. AD 200-1000*. The decline of Christendom should not be equated with a decline in Christianity, as: “Christendom is no more than a phase in the history of Christianity, and it represents only one out of many possible relationships between church and society” (McLeod, 2003: 2). However, the phasing-out of Christendom has had its effect on Christianity, which “has been gradually losing its status as a lingua franca, and has tended to become a local language used by those who are professing Christians, but not understood by others” (Op. cit.: 11). The language of Christian sleep

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<sup>10</sup> For such a social constructionist approach that insists on how the category of religion as well as the distinction between religious and secular have been constructed and how the lack of awareness of this fact has made secularisation debates “a dialogue of the deaf”, see: Beckford, 2003: 68.

discipline is not necessarily spoken by those who are well versed in the media, business and popular medicine languages of sleep discipline. Sometimes, though, the discourses produced in these languages borrow from Christian rhetoric. The meaning of this rhetoric and the meanings it conveys change by being transferred to a new linguistic framework, to remain within the orbit of McLeod's metaphor.

That the secular has emancipated itself from religious institutions and internally differentiated itself lies at the core of the secularisation thesis and is granted even by Casanova (1994), although he rejects what he considers as two subtheses to this core assumption, namely that religious decline and privatisation could be uniformly diagnosed in the modern world. We might say that secular sleep disciplines are products of this emancipation from religious institutions. The Foucauldian concept of discipline and the Althusserian one of ideology are methodically combined in this study with negative critique. This combination is embedded in a reflexive approach.

"Reflexive scholars ... are more interested in questions of point of view and the stance of the observer than they are with issues of neutrality, objectivity, and fact. They are like artists who paint themselves, their subjects, and sometimes even their audience into their own canvases, allowing the observer to see the artist painting the picture of the artist painting the picture of the viewer watching the artist paint a picture; all of this challenges the viewer to see themselves actively viewing, even making, the picture a picture" (McCutcheon, 2005: 10).

Obviously, the analogy with the artist quickly reaches its limits when we apply it to the constraints of academic industry and its qualification requirements. As a methodological aspiration, however, I think the reflexive approach takes the demands of intellectual sincerity seriously. As a critical project this is based on a socio-historical dialectic and focussing on the ideological and political dimensions of research. It is founded on the hope for emancipation, "but without providing any given formulaic solution and without making critical interpretations from rigid frames of reference" (Alvesson/Sköldberg, 2000: 110). In this critical vein it is about "making the familiar foreign ..., ... problematizing the self-evident and pointing out that future realities need not be a reproduction of what exists today" (Op. cit.: 139). To do so it embarks on a triple hermeneutics, encompassing the subjects' interpretations, the researcher's interpretations and, thirdly: "the critical interpretation of unconscious processes, ideologies, power relations, and other expressions of dominance that entail the privileging of certain interests over others" (Op. cit.: 144).

The sources used in this study – literary and doctrinal texts as well as the artefacts of material culture, different types of data chosen for the purpose of triangulation – are documenting their respective temporal and cultural contexts. When graves and architecture can be seen as forms of documentation (Prior 2003), surely bells and clocks might as well be included in such a broad definition. This definition also has room for the constructionist feature of discourse analysis with documents as “essentially social products. They are constructed in accordance with rules, they express a structure, they are nestled within a specific discourse, and their presence in the world depends on collective, organized action” (Op. cit.: 12). According to Prior, social research has to a large extent disregarded documents in its practice. He attributes this disregard to the Western privileging of spoken language as diagnosed by Derrida. However, the relative neglect of documents within certain traditions of social research may also have to do with their present-centredness and, in some parts, a lack of historical awareness. That the past has been blocked out by social researchers is also claimed by McCulloch’s (2004) presentation of documentary research, which includes fiction, such as Bunyan’s and Defoe’s novels, in its view of documentary research. For this study an opening up of historical vistas is fundamental, as it is mainly situated within the historical sociology of religion (Turner 2003).

The uses made in this study of discourse and document analyses need elaborating. Discourse analysis is supposed to be constructionist and anti-realist (Bryman 2004). Yet, some practitioners of discourse analysis are pretty close to a realist position. What could realism or anti-realism mean in the context of religious/secular sleep discipline? This is not the place to judge on the correspondence between what religious people believe and some sort of external reality that is independent of the former. Perhaps, the realism/anti-realism divide is not particularly helpful to think with in the sociology of religion. If this study subscribes to the position of methodological agnosticism, it does so in at least two directions: One is the familiar theme of abstaining from judging about the believers’ object/s of belief, most notably God. His/her existence or non-existence is not an issue of the sociological analyses presented here. Apart from these religious, more specifically theo-logical, questions that I shall not venture to discuss, there is a second set of questions that the methodological agnosticism I suggest has to leave to others. These questions are of an anthropological nature, as they are concerned with innate human qualities or potentials of human beings, e.g. as self-transcending beings. The merits and demerits of such approaches are outside the confines of this

study. Its two-pronged – a-theological and non-anthropological – methodological agnosticism is complemented on a more substantive level by a Marxian critique of religion. Truth questions about the existence of God and the essence of human nature are bracketed, but the the social constructions of God and Wo/Man and their historical effects are explored. This critical exploration pursues Marx's idea that religion is at the same time the expression of real misery and a protest against it; however, this protest remains fundamentally flawed, as it does not attack the real causes of misery. The Marxian view of religion as “opium *of* the people” is definitely more nuanced than Lenin’s adaptation as “opium *for* the people” and does not easily dismiss all religious phenomena out of hand. We might even feel sympathy for the “sigh of the oppressed creature” (Ibd.) that religion is according to Marx, and yet recognise that the sigh is not going to put an end to oppression. Since this study deals with discipline/s, the emphasis is placed on aspects of oppression and expressions of misery.

Situating sleep within the lived body has given us a reference frame that most of the earlier, scattered sociological writings on sleep (e.g. Aubert/White 1959) lacked in this explicitness. Attempts at clarifying the phenomenological and biological factors that bear upon sleep certainly broaden our horizons when thinking about sleep. Yet, I shall take these attempts to be as much discursive constructs as their theoretical, constructionist contenders self-confessedly are, without according them any privileged access to a seemingly pre- or extra-discursive reality.

By way of ending this ‘First Call’, I would like to introduce the structure of this study: Starting out by mapping sleep in terms of religion, history, and social theory in chapter 2, I shall then direct our attention to contemporary debates about an ‘unslept’ society. In the historically orientated chapters 4 to 6 as well as in the excursus on contemporary evangelical sleep discipline, chapter 7, different types of sources are explored: Biblical and exegetical sources, Early Christian writers, monastic rules, sermons, theological manuals, but also present-day self-help books on sleep. Surely, those discourses past and present have not emerged out of the blue; the stoic influence, for instance, is palpable in the historic Christian theologians who appropriated philosophy. And it is certainly not a coincidence that stoicism as a philosophy of both action and renunciation, or action in and through renunciation, a philosophy that developed ways of disciplining the body, was the candidate chosen by the Christian pastors. I continuously strive to link the historical to contemporary concerns, because it is these contemporary concerns that form the starting point for my problematising

approach – the risks of ‘problematisation’ and the question whether this is a proper way of reading history (Castel 1994) notwithstanding. In chapter 8, I take a look at a different type of texts about sleep discipline and their wake-up calls, as which I reconstruct them: Those calls have materialised in culture, i.e. church and factory bells, silent monitors, alarm clocks, and Clocky. Material culture is a broad field, ranging from written texts and material symbols to shopping and road construction. The kind of material culture I am focusing on in this study is the one in which sleep disciplines have materialised and continued to call us to vigilance. Fictional texts are examined in chapter 9. This is based on the assumption that classical as well as contemporary fiction offers us a glimpse of present-day potentials in and alternative futures of sleep. The temporary withdrawal from the world in and through sleep, if interpreted in terms of a utopian horizon, might very well become the place where the great refusal is acted out – paradoxically so, because in sleep nothing is acted out. “The Great Refusal is the protest against unnecessary repression, the struggle for the ultimate form of freedom – ‘to live without anxiety’” (Marcuse, 1998: 149 et seq.). Herbert Marcuse, who in the last part of the sentence quoted refers to Adorno, might be re-read and this re-reading then applied in what I would call a sleep-utopian vein: The refusal in sleep is reversible, to be sure, yet no less radical for that matter. The sleeper, who periodically stays off from and returns to the world she finds herself in, presents a challenge to that very world, because she is a living reminder of the limits of power it has over her. As such, she also reminds one of the limits of power that all sleep disciplines, religious and secular alike, are able to exert. The sleeper’s refusal points to the Utopian horizon. It is also Marcuse who provides us with a reason for tracking down the grounding for such a refusal in fiction: “The groups and group ideals, the philosophies, *the works of art and literature* that still express without compromise the fears and hopes of humanity stand against the prevailing reality principle: they are its absolute denunciation” (Op. cit.: 105; Italics AF). Yet, whether we are really able to trace such refusal in fiction on sleep, or how it is that in our quest we are predominantly faced with the dystopia of disturbed sleep or no sleep at all, is discussed in that chapter. Finally, the ‘Last Call’, will summarise the main points and offer some perspectives on sleep discipline/s and on where we might go from there. Being itself a call, like the preceding chapters it is interpellative. It is an anti-disciplinarian appeal to preserve the sleep-utopian imagination and to be willing *not* to be docile, useful, sleep-disciplined subjects.

## 2 Mapping Sleep: Religion, History, Social Theory

In this chapter I intend to outline the broader context, in which this study of Christian sleep disciplines and its contemporary successors is situated. This context is reconstructed by placing sleep and its study within a number of different frameworks. First of all, I will look at the way sleep has been dealt with in Religious Studies by examining relevant entries in a sample of encyclopedias in the discipline. Secondly, I am going to explore Marcel Mauss's concept of body techniques and its applicability to sleep. I shall then show that and how we can discern a range of body techniques of sleep in the areas of both religion and history. For the purpose of presentation they will be kept apart, although they intersect empirically. The product of this effort is a large-scale map, which will allow us to zoom in on certain sections. Bearing in mind that 'map is not territory' we do at the same time recognise that "maps are all we possess", and that is why "We need to reflect on and play with the necessary incongruity of our maps before we set out on a voyage of discovery to chart the worlds of other men [sic!]" (Smith, Jon. Z., 1978: 309). In the final section of this chapter, we shall leave the Maussian map behind, examine what other maps have got to offer, and decide to choose a map that shows the prisons and panopticons of this world as landmarks. Or, to put it in less metaphorical terms, we are going to work on sleep discipline.

### *Sleep and the Academic Study of Religion/s*

Let us begin by paying some attention to the wider picture of sleep and religion. Encyclopedic knowledge of and about religion recommends itself as a good starting point. When we consult such encyclopedic works to find out about sleep, we will often not find any entry on the subject as such, particularly in the more dated volumes and editions. If sleep is mentioned at all it is, with some regularity, in conjunction with and under the rubric of dreams, or a little more fortunately under "Dreams and Sleep" as in the 1912 *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* edited by Scottish Free Church minister James Hastings. Its multi-authored article (Lang et al. 1912) starts off with a general introduction and proceeds through sections on different cultures ("American", "Babylonian", "Egyptian", "Greek", "Japanese", "Jewish", "Teutonic", and "Vedic", respectively). The introduction contextualises dreams within sleep by referring to what

is called “psycho-physiology” (Op. cit.: 28), not without mentioning the nascent state of this particular type of scientific understanding. It is important to bear in mind that this text was published in 1912, i.e. about forty years before Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep was discovered. Aristotle is brought into play as representing “the earliest scientific treatment of the subject” (Ibd.) pointing out its digestive and blood-circulatory functions – and thus constituting a materialist explanation of sleep. Similarly, Wilhelm Wundt is referenced for having located the cause of sleep in the central nervous system and having given reasons of physiology and recent memories for the contents of dreams. The author of the section criticises this, as well as other parts of the account, without ever mentioning Freud and his 1899/1900 *Interpretation of Dreams*, in which recent memories were famously conceptualised as “Tagesreste” or day residues. While this source was available at the time, others clearly were not yet. Due to this lack of information, the author was not able to answer the question whether sleep can appear without dreams. Today, however, we know that it can, as certain types of brain injury deprive people of their ability to dream. Nevertheless, it is to be stressed that even nowadays the science of sleep is still at the beginning according to some of its leading representatives. In the 1912 article, the introductory section on Greece mentions Hesiod’s *Theogony*, which has Nyx giving birth to Hypnos and Thanatos, but other than that it concentrates solely on dreams – as do the sections on individual religious cultures. Here, at times strong value judgments are at work, for example in the case of the author on Babylonian dreams (and sleep). He concludes his treatment of oneiromantic, i.e. relating to divination by dreams, books<sup>11</sup> with the rhetorical question: “Could a pseudo-science end in greater puerilities?” (Op. cit.: 34). Characteristically, each section begins by repeating the encyclopedia entry with the name of the culture as adjective in brackets, and then in the actual entry from the first sentence on the noun given is ‘dream/s’ only. Could it be that the contributors adhered to the belief of the Norwegian King Halfdan the Black who is mentioned for having slept in a pig-sty to gain the benefit of dreams, as a sleep without dreams we learn “was considered a disquieting mental disease” (Op. cit.: 38)? That this view was in fact not shared by all cultures can be confirmed by a look at the Upanishads<sup>12</sup> – although the one we are allowed to take in the “Vedic” section also succumbs to the overall emphasis

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<sup>11</sup> The third volume of Michel Foucault’s (1986) *History of Sexuality* begins with an analysis of second-century CE Artemidoros’ dream book, particularly its assumptions about the prognostic nature of sexual dreams.

<sup>12</sup> Or by a look at the *Apology* of Socrates, where death is seen as being beneficial if it was like a dreamless sleep (see: Strobl, 2002: 31).

on dreams. By way of summary, we cannot but notice a remarkable gap between the standpoint of psycho-physiology, according to which dream is firmly placed within the realm of sleep as is laid out in the introductory paragraph, and the neglect of sleep ensuing in the individual sections of this article.

By contrast, Jonathan Z. Smith's (1987) entry on "Sleep" in the *Encyclopedia of Religion* shows an awareness of the difference between sleeping and waking life. Rather than juxtaposing a number of cultures – as was done in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* –, here the topic is presented in three parts, namely "Mythologies of Sleep", "Rituals of Sleep", and "Metaphors of Sleep". In the first part, particular attention is paid to the God Hypnos, and we learn that like other personifications of sleep he was only rarely the object of ritual devotion. The trope of sleeping, and more frequently never-sleeping and omniscient, deities is documented. Smith also tells us about tales shaped by a Rip-van-Winkle<sup>13</sup> motif that can be found widely in folklore throughout the centuries, from Endymion to Barbarossa, or with a clearly religious message in the legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. Externally induced, magic sleep and a hero's abstention from sleep also figure abundantly in narrative knowledge. The belief in the soul's separation from the body during sleep was recorded by Edward B. Tylor and James G. Frazer, and animal metamorphoses in sleep can be found in shamanic traditions. In the part on rituals, sleeping arrangements are identified as pertaining to "religious etiquette" (8441), being linked with issues of sexuality and social status. Incubation sleep<sup>14</sup> has been reported for American Indians as well as for Asklepianism<sup>15</sup>. Interruptions of sleep were regulated in Christian monasticism and Daoism as well as other religious traditions. The Mahabharata has sleep as one of the five sins a yogin must liberate himself from – as must the stylite or pillar saint, who would be stung by a scorpion when fallen asleep according to the satirist Lucian. In

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<sup>13</sup> Drawing on folkloristic story-telling, Washington Irving narrated Rip van Winkle's story (which was also used by Max Frisch in *Stiller*), the story of a man who is neglectful in household matters and oppressed by his wife but kind and helpful to others. He sleeps for twenty years before returning to a completely changed environment, his village and the world.

<sup>14</sup> Epimenides's fifty-seven year long sleep has also been interpreted accordingly. As Cambridge Ritualist Jane E. Harrison put it: "His career begins, in orthodox fashion, with a long magical sleep ... The long sleep is usually taken as just one of the marvels of the life of Epimenides. The real significance lies deeper. The cave in which he went to sleep was no chance cave; it was the cave of Diktaean Zeus. The sleep was no chance sleep; it was the sleep of initiation" (Harrison, J., 1962: 53). She cites a similar practice among Australian tribal people for the transition to becoming a medicine man and mentions the administration of sleep-inducing substances in this context.

<sup>15</sup> The choir in Sophocles' *Philoktetes* implores personified Sleep and his healing powers: "Sophocles' hymn is our earliest possible sighting of Sleep in a healing context in late fifth century Athens; a case could be made for Sleep having a place in the sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros from the late fourth century, and at Sikyon a little later" (Stafford, 2003: 98).



this broad context Jonathan Z. Smith (1987: 8441) observes that “sleep deprivation is the mark of a spiritual athlete” – we will encounter this theme again and again in the course of this study. Most interesting is the section on “Metaphors of Sleep” that deals with the metaphoric depiction of sleep as death, ignorance and mystical enlightenment<sup>16</sup>. While this list is not exhaustive – for example, sleep as a metaphor for laziness could be added and will be examined in the main part of this study –, it draws our attention to a fact that we will come across frequently in the course of this study: Literal and metaphorical meanings often overlap when it comes to sleep. They are often intertwined, so that tearing them apart would amount to seriously distorting the ways in which sleep has been made sense of and practically dealt with. The integrating approach that Smith has chosen has advantages over the sometimes repetitive chaining of one culture to the next, the approach encountered in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. The likely objection that integration might blur the differences between traditions does not hold true in this case. Smith mentions, for example, how sleep has been seen as part of mystical enlightenment, yet also how such enlightenment was mostly linked to awakening. So, there is a sensitivity towards differences in this encyclopedic approach.

A still more recent example of encyclopedic knowledge on religion and sleep is to be found in Gregor Ahn’s (2004) “Sleep” in the fourth edition of *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. This article is much shorter than the two previously discussed ones. Of course, this would not have to be a deficiency in itself, but unfortunately it reads more like a summary of its 1912 than of the 1987 predecessor. The main reason for this impression is that with the older text it shares the almost complete concentration on dreams. Yet, while this is even understandable in case of the older text, given that the lemma was “Dreams and Sleep”, for a piece devoted to sleep – “Schlaf” – as the *RGG* one’s is, it strikes one as odd. Sleep itself surfaces only as ‘a vital bodily function’ and a ‘basic given of human life’. While these definitions are not wrong *per se* and could have formed a promising starting point for exploring the realities of sleep, without that further effort being made, they remain insufficient. Immediately this biological datum and its function are categorised and interpreted, ranging from contact with a world beyond to soul-travelling. Ahn’s (2004) really is an

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<sup>16</sup> On spiritual or “goostly” sleep as a mystical union with God in late medieval English mysticism see Wöhrer (2000). It is to be noted, however, that this form of sleep – sometimes associated with the Beloved Disciple’s sleep at Jesus’s breast – corresponds with a heightened state of internal awareness. Therefore, we find recurring references to the Song of Songs “Ego dormio et cor meum vigilat” (5:2), “I sleep, but my heart is awake”.

article about experiences in sleep, “Schlaferleben (-> Traum)” [sic!], not about those forms of sleep in which the sleeper lacks experience. In this very vein, the article goes on about dreams for the remainder of the text, even though there is a separate entry for dreams in this encyclopedia.

The first and third articles we have examined here could lead one to assume that scholars of religion can only make sense of sleep *qua* and as dream: This is not to say that the preoccupation with dreams is specific to scholars of religion. Eugenio Rignano’s (1920) promise of “A New Theory of Sleep and Dreams” was similarly preoccupied, albeit from a philosophical perspective. He positioned himself against biological theories of sleep that neglected dreams. Unfortunately, this resulted in turn in a neglect of sleep to the extent of identifying it with dream: In answering a classical question about the soul at sleep he deals with the soul in dream. This is not simply a case of mixing up analytical distinctions. It also proves inadequate in view of the more basic quality of sleep: While we can have sleep without dreams, we do not have dreams without sleep – day-dreaming notwithstanding. A more recent philosophical attempt at defining the relation of sleep and dream has been made by Owen Flanagan (1995, 2000), who stresses the evolutionary development of sleep as an adaptation, whereas dreams are ‘spandrels’, decorative but not strictly necessary additions like those that can be found in architecture. In other words, dreams are side effects of sleep. The idea of sleep as adaptation encourages us to think of it as an “evolutionary universal” like vision, hands and brain. Yet, how and in what ways sleep has furthered evolution and “helped to attain certain higher levels of general adaptive capacity” (Parsons, 1964: 341) is still a moot point given different theories of the physiology and functions of sleep. It is beyond the remit of this study and the competence of its author to give a verdict on the biological issues concerned, particularly since the jury of scientists is still very much out on this question. Going back to religion, however, Jonathan Z. Smith’s example of an encyclopedic article on sleep refreshingly shows that it can be done by actually writing about sleep. While not denying the realities of dream, he has managed to make space for sleep and thus established that it is worthwhile exploring the realities of it in religious culture/s.

### *Sleep and Social Theory: Body Techniques of Sleep*

What are the conceptual supports we can employ fruitfully to study sleep from a sociological perspective? How can we study the “religious etiquette” of sleep (J. Z. Smith), while at the same time bearing in mind that sleep is “a vital bodily function” (Ahn), about which what was called psycho-physiology (A. Lang) and its modern-day successors do have something to tell us about? If we want to take the bodily aspects of sleep seriously, we are well-advised to seek help from recent approaches in the sociology of the body and embodiment. While comparatively new as a designated specialisation or subdiscipline, it has found some of its inspiration in classical texts. One of these, one particularly apposite to be taken into account in our context of research is Marcel Mauss’s essay on body techniques, “a slightly strange and far from convincing account but ... very important and interesting” (Crossley, 2005: 121). Mauss (1934) gives a range of examples for body techniques: swimming, digging, marching, positions of the hand, and running. He considers the notion of *habitus* a fitting translation of Aristotle’s ‘*hexis*’. It varies with the individuals concerned but also with societies, education, conventions, fashion, and prestige. Biological, sociological and psychological aspects all have to be considered according to Mauss, who accords a prominent place to the effects of education. He defines technique as an act that is both traditional and efficient. The human body is the first and most natural object as well as means of technique. Mauss has been criticised for implying that an agent and his/her body are distinct entities. Instead of talking about uses of the body, Nick Crossley has therefore suggested “to say that body techniques are ways in which the body uses itself” (Crossley, 2005: 118, fn. 97). The Maussian techniques vary according to sex, which is not yet differentiated from gender, and age, according to their efficiency and to the ways in which they are passed on to future generations or traditions. While these variations constitute a first classification of techniques, another one is proposed that takes the life course as its lead. Hence, there are techniques of birth and midwifery, childhood, adolescence and those of adult life. The latter ones are subdivided into seven forms of techniques. There are techniques of caring for one’s body, consumption, reproduction and treatment. The first two forms that are introduced in the context of those of adulthood are crucial for our discussion: techniques of sleep and techniques of waking which is differentiated into (bodily) rest, as in sitting or crouching, and activity or movement. Techniques of activity and movement include running and dancing, jumping and climbing, descending, swimming as well as applying force in pushing, pulling and lifting things. Yet, the inventory of these techniques of adult life

places the techniques of sleep first. Sleep is clearly categorised as a body technique or as made manifest in a number of techniques and not only “mediated by way of body techniques” as Crossley (2004: 10), probably due to his own emphasis on phenomenology and reflexivity, has it. The idea that sleep is a mere fact of nature is repudiated by Mauss. The stress on the social character of something seemingly individual is a recurring theme in his writings, including those dealing with religion (Menezes 2005). Mauss is generally rather fond of anecdotal, autobiographical evidence and often refers to his experiences in the First World War, in which he lost many students and friends. The war, he says, told him how to sleep anywhere. However, sleeping in a different bed than the one he is used to has always been accompanied by insomnia at first. He goes on to distinguish between societies whose members sleep on the bare floor and others, in which certain implements are used for sleep: Benches to support one’s neck and totems used as rests can be gleaned from anthropological research; as can the use of mats and cushions. There are people who sleep in a group around a fire or without one, and different archaic manners of keeping one’s feet warm. Sleeping while standing is also a variant, or sleeping on horseback as Mauss did himself. Sleeping with a cover or without one makes a further difference as does the hammock, or similar ways of positioning the body for and during sleep. These and many more practices are body techniques with biological echoes and effects for Mauss, who believed that there was still a great deal to discover in this field.

### *Body Techniques of Sleep in Magic and Religion*

Sleep magic is an ancient body technique of sleep. The Mishnah (1933: Moed: Shabbath: 6.10) condemns it as an Amorite custom, which included the use of a jackal’s tooth. If taken from a live jackal it was believed to cure sleepiness. Sleeplessness, on the other hand, was held to be overcome by means of a dead jackal’s tooth. It has been practised by Native Americans, too. In Bierhorst (1994) we have a selection of songs and charms from different tribal groups<sup>17</sup>. These are rather brief and simple texts, nicely illustrated, in a book chiefly aimed at children. In place of a preface there is an introduction to what Native American sleep magic is about:

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<sup>17</sup> They have developed different mythologies of sleep, too. The Odjibwa, for instance, have a God of sleep named Weeng, whose little helpers are believed to go around armed with clubs to more or less gently hit whomever they encounter and to send them to slumber in this way.

“Sleep magic is one of the gentler arts practiced by American Indian poets and song makers. Special combinations of words, called charms are calculated to make people drowsy. Sleep songs, special words set to music, are meant to have the same effect, usually upon the very young and usually at nightfall. Native American traditionalists also know that night is a time for healing, a time when plants grow, and a time for creative awakening – all of which may take place during sleep.” (Bierhorst, 1994: s. p.)

The intended addressees of this technique are children and adolescents, and its purpose is “to make sleep irresistible” (Ibd.). We can thus classify this form of sleep magic as a body technique of childhood and adolescence, in addition to its being a body technique of sleep. Furthermore, it is a technique of healing the body. Homeopathic magic, linking death and sleep, has been used to assure one’s being undisturbed by others; by sprinkling earth from a dead person’s grave on the roof of the parents’ whose daughter one intends to meet in secret, or by throwing dead people’s bones over a house to go safely about one’s business of burglary (Frazer<sup>18</sup>, 1993: 30). There have also been magical beliefs about the soul leaving one’s body during sleep (Op. cit.: 181 et seqq.), a soul that is supposed to be journeying, meeting people and performing actions as s/he dreams s/he does. This leave becomes dangerous when it turns from temporary to permanent, as a consequence of which the person dies. If it is necessary to wake someone, one has to do so carefully, for the soul may need some time to return to the body – and in case the person is up before the soul is back, s/he will fall ill. Changing the sleeper’s position or appearance may also prove fatal, since the soul might be unable to recognise its body. On the other hand, to prevent the soul from its leaving the body for good, some peoples have kept their sick members from sleeping, so that their soul may stay with them and they may survive their illness (Op. cit.: 192 et seq.). Such beliefs about the soul’s vacation from the body have also been recorded by Tylor (1913: 428, It. AF), who noted that it seems as if “thinking men, as yet at a low level of culture” were concerned with the problem what it is “that makes the difference between a living body and a dead one; what causes waking, *sleep*, trance, disease, death?”.

In Ancient China (Richter 2003), medical writing considered sleep as the necessary counterpart to waking, as yin is to yang, with the night being defined as appropriate time for it – sleeping during the day was condemned by Confucius. The importance of sleep for digestion was clearly seen from such a medical point of view. In practice sleep was restricted for purposes of cultivating the self. This put a limit on

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<sup>18</sup> On Frazer’s role in the history of religion see: Kippenberg, 1997: 128-142.

one's opportunities of seeking refuge from the world in sleep or of pursuing the bedroom-related pleasures of consumption, drunkenness, sex and music and the neglect of one's duties. The higher up the social ladder one was the less sleep one was expected to indulge in. The Confucian maxim was 'Early to rise and late to bed'. Self-mutilation as a means of sleep-prevention was practised, e.g. by cutting off one's eyelids or scorching one's palms (Op. cit.: 35). These have to be seen as body techniques of waking rather than belonging to those of sleep. While Confucian, Mohist and Legalist texts are all suspicious of sleep, in elements of Daoism we find "a positive counter-conception" (38), especially in Zhuangzi's praise for dreamless sleep and the uselessness of this state. Perhaps this is not surprising given the central role of *Wuwei* or non-action in this philosophical approach. Zhuangzi urged his addressees not to be worried about a tree's uselessness, but rather to plant it in the vast land of 'Never-not', where one could wander about in non-action and sleep under the tree without worries. Zhuangzi, who raised the question of how we know whether we are awake or dreaming that played a role for Augustine and Descartes too, also declared that the original, true human being did neither dream during sleep nor worry while awake. That being without use and refraining from doing belong together is stressed by Wohlfart (2001: 86), who questions that not-doing is less worth than doing and that it would be better to do something rather than nothing.

American and Japanese attitudes toward sleep have been classically contrasted by anthropologist Ruth Benedict (1989). For the Japanese, she claims sleeping was a "favored indulgence. It is one of the most accomplished arts of the Japanese. They sleep with complete relaxation, in any position, and under circumstances we regard as sheer impossibilities" (Op. cit: 180). To Americans, as Benedict wrote in 1946, it is strange what devoted early-to-bed sleepers Japanese people are, who are supposed to be tense and insomniac. Instead they see the value that sleep has in and of itself – so different from the Americans who are calculating the hours of sleep they get. However, the Japanese are also great at sacrificing sleep for exams or military purposes to prove their strength and stamina. Thus in their cultural context, sleep figures for pleasure as well as for discipline, offering "a chance to demonstrate that one can 'take it'" (Benedict, 1989: 182). A disciplinary aspect of gender differentiation can be detected in educating girls towards assuming what is held to be a modest sleeping position. The continuous emphasis on work ethics and proper time use in contemporary Japanese advice books has been discussed by Brigitte Steger (2003b). More recently, she has made her

findings accessible to a wider reading public – in a book advertising its advice character in the title, “Inemuri: How the Japanese sleep and what we can learn from them” (Steger 2007). ‘Inemuri’ is the Japanese term for being present and asleep at the same time, or for sleeping while officially being involved in something else, like being on a train journey or in a business meeting.<sup>19</sup> This day-time practice is paired with a short night-time sleep, and viewed together these practices constitute a distinct napping culture. The latter differs from both monophasic sleep culture – the dominant Western ideal with an eight-hour sleep phase during the night – and a biphasic or siesta<sup>20</sup> culture, which has an additional sleep phase in the afternoon. In spite of the success of the eight-hour sleep ideal, modern Japanese reality is shaped by the prevalence of a napping culture. If napping regenerates the body, sleep reduction and deprivation play a role in the phenomenon of death by overwork. Buddhist and Confucian doctrines of little sleep and early rising have facilitated the adoption of a work ethics rooted in Puritan thinking (Steger 2004).

In recent conversations with scientists, the Dalai Lama has drawn parallels between sleep research and traditional Tibetan understanding of sleep: The four stages of REM-sleep can be compared to the four stages of falling asleep into the clear light of sleep in Tantric Buddhism. In this tradition, the nourishing, restoring and refreshing qualities that sleep has for the body are stressed. While in deep sleep, sleep is not present as there is no awareness, sleep yoga and related practices grant “experiences of clarity and luminosity” (Varela, 1997: 64). The clear light is present in sleep, whether one is aware of it or not. The ideal sleeping position is lying on one’s right side in the so-called ‘lion posture’ (Segal/Segal 1982), not one’s left or heart side. In lucid dreams, the dreamer who is aware of dreaming has control over his/her dreams. Lucid Dreams occur mainly during REM sleep. They last for about one to six minutes, mostly in the early morning towards the end of one’s sleep time, as then REM sleep is frequent. Green and McCreery (1994) warn against overestimating the control a lucid dreamer

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<sup>19</sup> Steger has used the Goffmanian terminology of subordinate and dominant involvements to make sense of Inemuri as subordinate involvement.

<sup>20</sup> The siesta was practised by the Ancient Romans, too, according to Wiedemann (2003). While comedy associated slaves with the siesta, it was a right of a Roman citizen to have one (and thus, we may add, a mark of social distinction!). However, he was supposed to master his sleep needs: “There was a moral component to sleeping: to be under the control of the need to sleep was to lack one of the standard moral virtues of rhetorical (and philosophical) theory, *temperantia*, self-control, in the same way as being controlled by the need for food, drink, or sex” (Op. cit.: 131). This ideal went on to be upheld in Christianity, as we shall subsequently explore in this study and as is also indicated by Wiedemann: “It was not just in the Gospel story of the wise and foolish virgins ... that being asleep symbolised a moral shortfall” (Ibd.).

can exercise over the course and contents of his/her dreams. Lucidity, they claim, allows for little more than for being a passive observer of dream events, at best more emotionally remote than before having understood the situation. Eighth-century Tibetan Buddhists already knew about the possibility of taking waking consciousness into dream, and there appears to be evidence from other parts of India for the same time. Ordinary sleep is seen as ignorant and awareness is aspired to in the Tibetan tradition by the practice of yoga. Apart from dream yoga, there is also sleep yoga<sup>21</sup>. Three types of sleep are distinguished: sleep of ignorance, then samsaric sleep, which is the sleep of dreams, and clear light sleep – it is the third type one aspires to by the practice of sleep yoga. The practice of sleep yoga is gendered, as it requires different positions for women and men, and it is more demanding than the dream exercises. The aim is permanent non-dual awareness (Wangyal 1998). In this traditional context the positive functions of sleep are emphasised, but at the same time sleep is to be governed by conscious purpose. In this vein, the Dalai Lama explained to his audience: “if you can also use your consciousness during sleep for wholesome purposes, then the power of your spiritual practice will be all the greater. Otherwise at least a few hours each night will be just a waste. So if you can transform your sleep into something virtuous, this is useful” (Varela, 1997: 124). The practice of sleep yoga is not about forgoing sleep, but about transforming it. Historically, actual Tibetan body techniques of sleep differed according to social class.<sup>22</sup>

Homer’s *Iliad* as well as Hesiod’s *Theogony* show Sleep and Death as brothers, Hypnos and Thanatos, sons of the Night, Nyx. In Homer, sleep is a gift, but it can also be a danger to warriors. In the *Iliad*, Hera persuades Hypnos to send Zeus to sleep. This is the first time that Hypnos appears as the brother of Thanatos (Wöhrle, 1995: 11). In the *Odyssee*, numerous passages describe the bedding used: Bull’s hide, skins of sheep and goats, beds, cushions and coats are all mentioned and variously arranged

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<sup>21</sup> Max Weber (1988: 168) defined Yoga as an apathic and ecstatic technique, in which the old, ecstatic sorcerer’s practice was rationalised. Benjamin R. Smith (2007: 29) recalls Mauss’s suggestion of studying mystical states and body techniques through Sanskrit texts. He criticises this as well as Mircea Eliade’s textual orientation. This line of criticism is due to Smith’s own self-positioning as a practitioner of yoga who feels that its practice may have a positive effect on theorising embodiment.

<sup>22</sup> “Erwähnenswert ist, dass bei den Tibetern das Lager der gewöhnlichen Leute, ob es nun aus Polstern, Decken, Fellen oder Lumpen besteht, die sie auf der nackten Erde oder auf einem Bretterboden ausbreiten, immer kurz ist und dem Schläfer nicht erlaubt, sich ganz auszustrecken. In ganzer Länge ausgestreckt zu liegen, ist das Vorrecht der Leute, die den höheren sozialen Klassen angehören; die anderen müssen wie die Jagdhunde schlafen, die Knie an die Brust gezogen; eine andere Lage gilt als tadelnswerte Anmassung” (David-Néel, 2000: 84).



to make up frugal or luxurious bed sites<sup>23</sup>. “Sweet” sleep is often pictured as covering one’s eyes and eyelashes. In the arts, Hypnos has appeared in many guises; young, middle-aged, old; from naked to well-clad; with or without wings; standing, walking or resting (Preller, 1964: 845 et seq.). He and his brother were depicted on the chest of Kypselos according to Pausanias in around 600 BCE as a white and a black boy (s. Stafford 2003). Sleep/Hypnos has usually been identified as the white one of the two. Even though Hypnos was not a hugely popular cultic figure and ritual occurrences are rare<sup>24</sup>, this portrayal and his sibling connection with Death/Thanatos have lent him some significance in the world of Greek gods (Strobl, 2002: 19; Wöhrle 1995). In Rome, by contrast, Somnus seems to have been a mythical figure only and was not venerated (Windau, 1998: 46). However, the poetry of antiquity has frequently addressed sleep: In Ovid, Somnus is spoken to as the most peaceful and tender of the gods. He relieves one from life’s care and weariness and restores one’s powers. Erotic connotations of sleep are frequently invoked in ancient poetry as well. The moon’s lover Endymion is a famous sleeper in Greek and Roman mythological imagination. The supreme deity grants eternal youth and sleep to the handsome shepherd, who may also appear as a king or a hunter. Some versions present his sleep as the God’s gift granted upon Endymion’s request; others treat it as a punishment for having fallen in love with Hera.

Presocratic<sup>25</sup> philosophy held that there was something wrong with day-time sleepers and listed a number of causes for this despicable habit, as is shown in this quotation attributed to Democritus: “Sleeping during the day indicates bodily disturbance or distress of mind or idleness or lack of education” (D76; Taylor, C., 1999: 29). Democritus is also referred to by Tertullian in his *De Anima* (43.2) as holding that sleep is a deficiency of the mind. Anaxagoras was said to have seen sleep as an interruption of physical activity, a somatic not a psychic phenomenon, and that a separation of body and soul would mean the death of both soul and body. In Aristotle’s

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<sup>23</sup> For an instructive look at the design of the bedroom, see the brief chapter “Homer Nods” in Wright (2004: 9 et seq.).

<sup>24</sup> Compare this with Eger’s (1966) reference to Hypnos’ role in Asklepianism, which is also mentioned by Lauer (1998: 152), who names Epidauros, Kos, and Pergamon as cultic sites, where Asklepiian incubation sleep was practised. Here, the God appeared in dreams and gave therapeutic advice, which was interpreted by priests. Lauer sees continuity in the early medieval veneration of the saints Cosmas and Damian as well as Thekla at whose shrines incubation sleep was observed. According to Windau (1998) cultic veneration of Hypnos occurred at Troizen with the Muses, at Sikyon with Asklepios, and probably at Sparta with Aphrodite and Thanatos.

<sup>25</sup> Roberto Polito (2003) deals with the way in which the sceptic Sextus Empiricus read Heraclitus on sleep at the end of the second century CE. He argues against Sextus’ having been influenced by Stoicism, as this philosophy was marked by the idea of fusion and coextensiveness of body and soul, whereas Sextus assumed them to be distinct entities connected by channels.

thought there is a more systematic, proto-scientific approach to sleep, a quasi-chemical theory based on the process of digestion in sleep (s. Williams 2005<sup>26</sup>).

The Roman world knew of Somnus or Sopor, who was created by Jupiter. This act of creation allowed humans to sleep. Ovid presents him as a friendly God, who grants rest and recreation. A different attitude towards sleep was expressed by Seneca, for whom sleep was a necessary evil and promoted lack of purpose. It was *vanum* or vain and not be had in excess, for the *vita brevis* asked for its reduction. Seneca condemned those who turned the night into day, as he saw them living against nature, while his ideal was the *secundum naturam vivere*. Plato, Diogenes Laertios, and Pliny the Elder all also deplored the uselessness of the sleeper, although the latter one regularly took an afternoon nap (s. Strobl, 2002: 25 et seqq.; Wöhrle, 1995: 104). Positive as well as negative valuations of sleep have been unearthed for both Greek and Roman antiquity, and therefore no one-sided account of these views would do justice to the evidence.

Sleep and death were often been seen in parallel, an analogy based on the soul's absence of the body<sup>27</sup> in both states in Islamic thought. According to Schreiner (1977), in the Quran this analogy serves to make plausible the belief in the resurrection of the flesh<sup>28</sup>. It sheds light on what happens between death and resurrection and ponders the existence of the earthly and the resurrected human being. Due to this line of reasoning, as humans experience awakening from sleep, they will also wake up from death. Beyond the analogy, however, there is the concept of encounters between the living and the dead in sleep (Smith, Jane, 1980). Sleep is also pondered in the poetry of Rumi (2000: 16; 23; 38). As God does not sleep, neither do those who are devoted to him. Hearing from him, renders the devotee sleepless. His absence, by contrast, is

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<sup>26</sup> In his first chapter, Simon J. Williams (2005) gives an overview of a range of theories and explanations of sleep many of which cannot be discussed here.

<sup>27</sup> This idea can still be found today in the Jewish tradition. The 2007 *Authorised Daily Prayer Book* has a prayer "On Waking Up" that thanks God for his having returned the soul to the praying subject. Jewish prayer practice includes reciting the *Shema Israel* before going to sleep.

<sup>28</sup> The legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus has been narrated in several different versions to support the same claim (Schreiner, 1977: 123, fn. 41). For a full-length monograph on this tradition in both Christianity, Islam and the Koranic sura "The Cave", see: Jourdan 1983, who emphasizes the motif of resurrection. In his history of death, Philippe Ariès claims that there is not any other document elucidating the belief in the sleep of the dead better than this legend and that rest is the oldest, most popular and durable image of the afterlife. This image has been materialised over the centuries into different forms of burial (Ariès, 1993: 36 et seq.; 312 et seqq.). Archaeological evidence of the burial mounds at Hainichen in Thuringia, for instance, shows early Bronze Age skeletons buried in a crouching sleep position.

deep sleep. The image of an all-wakeful God has also been a defining one in Jewish and Christian religious imagination and as such inspired sleep disciplines.

While mysticism has been identified as the Religion of Repose without having any specific historic form in van der Leeuw's (1964) typology of religions, the Religion of Unrest is an element of every historic religion: "it is in fact the religion of a God Who rests not, Who 'shall neither slumber nor sleep', nor ever leave His people in repose". Israel, Islam and Christianity are prime examples for this belief: "For Power, in the first place, is always the force that prevents man accepting life and indulging himself" (Op. cit.: 606; 608). Even where repose or calm are strong, they cannot be foundational for religion:

"In the first place, a perfect religion of calm would abolish itself completely as a historical form, since without some activity there is no religion whatever; while (secondly) calm itself cannot be attained without struggle, and indeed severe struggle. Repose, therefore, is the goal of longing; nevertheless it may dominate a religion completely, and then monistic and pantheistic systems arise. But it may also be incorporated within the active tendencies of a religion, either as the ultimate human goal or eschatologically as the ultimate activity, the ultimate deed of God" (Op. cit.: 605).

Van der Leeuw's interest in religion was driven by cultural critique, his self-distancing from Enlightenment rationality (Kippenberg, 1992: 103 et seq.) and the desire to repatriate primitive mentality (Id., 1997: 255-8). From a different angle, Friedrich Nietzsche (1972: 111) remarked that all major religions fought an epidemic fatigue and that the ascetic ideal of some of them was a consequence of this fatigue, a means a degenerating life has devised for its self-preservation. Pessimistic religions and philosophies praised, adored, and deified sleep. Dreamless sleep<sup>29</sup> was ultimate evil to Nietzsche's mind. Religious attempts at hypnosis resembling animal hibernation or the Vedantic deep sleep the sufferer contents himself with do not convince Nietzsche; neither does machine-like activity, also known as the blessing of work, which is another one of the means used by the ascetic priest who rules over the sufferers. Nietzsche's Zarathustra listens to the speeches of a sage, whose wisdom is summarised as waking in order to sleep, a ridiculous wisdom for Zarathustra, Nietzsche and the reader, indeed. Ernst Cassirer (1994: 151) contrasted Persian und Indian concepts of sleep: In the Persian context, sleep appears as an evil demon paralysing human activity. Like light

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<sup>29</sup> A nuanced account of the phenomenon of dreamless sleep argues for an experience of sleep and, based on the Advaita Vedanta, holds that even in dreamless sleep there is knowledge, namely "the knowledge of 'absence of knowledge' or, what is the same, of ignorance" (Sharma, 2001: 218).

and darkness, good and evil, so are sleeping and waking conceived of as opposites. Indian thought, on the other hand has been drawn to the idea and ideal of deep, dreamless sleep. These two concepts of sleep are characteristic for two different concepts of time according to Cassirer.

### *Body Techniques of Sleep in History*

The historicity of sleep cultures has been recently brought to our attention by American historian A. Roger Ekirch (2001; 2006). In his studies, he rediscovered segmented sleep as a common practice in pre-industrial societies. In these, a period of first sleep would be followed by an interval of waking, followed by a span of second sleep. References to this segmentation can be found already in Antiquity, but the monastic tradition of interrupting sleep for prayer is also a case in point, although Ekirch does not make much of them. What makes these examples so interesting is that they challenge us to add further differentiations to the picture of monophasic sleep culture. They also alert us to the fact that the ideal type of this culture is a rather recent arrival on the historical scene of sleep patterns.

Norbert Elias (1997) has opened up a different, by now sociologically classic, perspective on the ways in which sleep has changed. He used behaviour in the bedroom as one of his examples to illustrate the civilisation process. In the course of this process, sleep and the room allocated to it have become more and more private and relegated 'behind the scenes' as the animal side of human life. Growing reservations against the naked body have been expressed by the introduction of specific night dress, while the members of medieval lay society were unclothed in sleep. Even though sleep restrictions lost some of their rigidity after the First World War, this should not be interpreted as a regression according to Elias. The move from nightgowns to pyjamas signifies a phase in which the wearer does not have to feel ashamed when being seen by others. Having a bed or even a bedroom of one's own further promoted the erection of a wall between bodies. Such a wall was unknown to medieval society<sup>30</sup>, in which even strangers shared the same bed. This widespread custom was referred to as 'pigging' in English (Ekirch 2001) and a far cry from the late civilisational perception of bed and body as "psychic danger zones" (Elias, 1997: 323). Elias's account of sleep, however,

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<sup>30</sup> On beds in medieval society see: Wittmer-Butsch, 1990: 28 et seqq. and the relevant passages in Wright 2004.

has not remained uncontested.<sup>31</sup> Simon J. Williams (2005: 41) finds it “both tantalisingly brief and partial” and not too helpful when it comes to questions of how sleep was experienced and distributed socially. Another line of criticism, taking on the civilisation thesis as a whole, is not convinced by Elias’s evidence. In his critique of what to him is the myth of the civilising process, Hans Peter Duerr (1992) favours a different interpretation of the historical sources. He argues that medieval people did not generally sleep naked, but in their underwear or even with their daytime clothes on. The practice of pigging was gender-segregating, as Duerr demonstrates for pilgrims’ hostels, inns and hospitals. His pointing to nunneries, in which the nuns were not allowed to share a bed, does not contradict Elias, though. Duerr’s general stress on gender-segregation is called into question by Ekirch’s findings on pre-industrial bundling in the British Isles, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland. Bundling meant that “couples were permitted to remain together overnight at the home of the girl’s parents without engaging in intercourse” (Ekirch, 2005: 197) and was governed by rules of conduct to prevent sexual activity. Evidence of bundling (also Wright, 2004: 202) could be found for as late as the nineteenth century, which makes historical generalisations appear problematic. Far from offering one simple generalisation, Birgit Emich (2003) sees two complementary tendencies at work in early modern sleep discourses: discipline and distinction. Monarchs and their courts were the agents who both enforced discipline and made use of sleep for distinction. Through the latter use they undermined what they preached in disciplinary terms. Emich claims that the church had lost sole control of time already as early as the fourteenth century, and that even the Reformation was unable to regain control. However, discipline became crucial, particularly in schools. Jesuit boarding schools and Francke’s foundations are Catholic and Protestant cases in point. Emich (2003: 65) quotes two preachers to whom we shall return later, Richard Baxter and John Wesley. In Wesley’s sermon on early rising she recognises the climax of the new sleep discourse. In the “secularised discourse” (Ibd.) of the German Enlightenment she detects similar concerns with time and its management. Their pedagogics aimed at controlling time as an end in itself, stripped of its religious meaning. Emich concludes that in pre-modern times sleep [!] was disciplined by work time and authority, but also by religious and moral discourses – and that this disciplining failed in the long run. This failure is defined in terms of the loss of the old daily rhythm, a general shift

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<sup>31</sup> More generally, Elias’s approach has also been criticised for his claims about the developmental logic of the civilisation process and his disregard for heterogeneous and discontinuous elements.

towards going to bed later at night and consequently getting up later in the morning, and the taking over by the new, secular(ised) morality of sleep. Sleep also served as a means of social distinction: The monastics' sleep had erected a religious boundary, thus distinguishing religious from lay life. Different sleep patterns also came to construct social boundaries, with those higher up the social ladder indulging in sleeping in. An Eliasian account is offered by Gleichmann (1980) and the idea of a progressing self-domestication in sleep. Parts of this development are to be seen in the allocation of sleep to special surroundings – with the historically later consequence of counting of beds and calculating with sleep – and the abolition of day-time sleeping. In this perspective, Elias's metaphor of new walls is invoked as is the concept of growing affective self-control, and the danger zone (Gleichmann 1983; with a stronger focus on the night). Change also plays a role if we choose to take a look at the larger picture of human development. In so doing, we are able to detect an interesting parallel with Steger's theory of different sleep cultures. According to research into prehistoric times, it seems likely that our ancestors' lives were governed by a polyphasic sleep pattern. The turn to monophasic sleep, we learn, came about gradually starting in the Neolithic, from around 10,000 BCE (Thorpy 2001). From time to place and space, the spatialisation of sleep<sup>32</sup> can be studied through the history of the bedroom. Late medieval merchants kept bedroom and living room for different purposes: The first was reserved for the enjoyable affairs of privacy and intimacy, often depicted in paintings, as well as for items of religious devotion. In the course of the eighteenth-century the bed changed its place. The bedroom was more lavishly furnished (Ranum 1991), and the bed was now moved to a corner. Beyond this episode of spatial change, the bed itself has become the subject of historical interest. While Wright (2004) offers an entertaining read about this place of repose throughout the centuries and different cultures, one ought to remember Mauss and bear in mind that the concept and use of the bed have not been shared by all. Nevertheless, wherever we find the bed, it has been a significant item of furniture: Often explicitly mentioned as an heirloom in wills, it was among the few possessions owned even by the poorer strata (Contamine 1990). It also served as a means of social distinction – an inference we can draw from the evidence for a “hierarchy of beds”. The size of the bed, the quality of the mattress and

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<sup>32</sup> Calculations of space and air required per body for sanitary reasons in institutionalised nineteenth-century settings of Victorian Britain are also relevant for the spatialisation of sleep (Crook 2004; 2008). This line of work combines an Eliasian civilising perspective with a Foucauldian approach on discipline to analyse the increasing privatisation of sleep and the “hygienic management” exerted upon sleeping bodies, which were “spatialised, aerated and cleansed” (Crook, 2008: 19).

bedding, the number of duvets and pillows, the material the frame was made of and various decorations were factors contributing to a specific bed's rank in that hierarchy (Op. cit.: 458 et seq.). Yet, even in a culture sharing the concept of a bed, this concept has not been put into practice by all. The rough sleepers of our day and age may serve as a reminder of that. Their plight was already recorded in 1845 by Friedrich Engels (1958) in his *Condition of the Working Classes in England*. He mentioned those who could not afford accommodation in London and slept wherever they could find some space where they were not bothered by police or proprietors: Park benches, for instance. Engels also refers to reports about Mancunian families whose lodgers, of either sex, share their own, one bed with the couple; and a number of cases, in which it was found that a husband, his wife and his adult sister-in-law used to sleep in the same bed. Such sleeping arrangements were often accompanied by conditions of dirt, dampness and deprivation. They became a matter of hygienic concern. Engels finds another health issue in the system of nightly shift-work and its bodily effects on children, who were even carried to the factories naked while asleep and literally beaten to work, and adults. He holds that such sleep deprivation cannot be made up for by sleeping during the day and leads to drunkenness and sexual affairs, often causing unwanted pregnancies. Moral issues addressed by other writers at the time were lying-in and dozing the condemnation of which was part of the Protestant legacy but for which the workers described by Engels hardly had the time. The eight-hour norm<sup>33</sup> replaced the broken sleep of former times and (self-)disciplinary motivation underwent change, too, as "the religious rationale for disciplined sleep ceded some precedence to considerations of health and, with the growth of factory employment, economic productivity" (Crook, 2008: 27).

While the role of gender in contemporary, synchronic terms is considered in the following chapter, gendered sleep also has a historical, diachronic dimension. This dimension is hard to grasp, as an explicit academic interest in gender has been manifested only recently. In her study of scientific discourses on sleep in nineteenth-century Germany, Sonja Kinzler (2005) has reached a cautious conclusion. She admits that the question whether these discourses targeted the human or the male body only cannot be fully answered. However, she has found that the literature in question often

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<sup>33</sup> Wittmer-Butsch (1990: 37) has found the earliest evidence for the eight-hour norm in the eleventh century. In the twelfth century, she tells us, Maimonides recommended eight hours.

appears to have a male reader in mind and to be based on gender stereotypes<sup>34</sup>, by referring different sleep needs back to differences in the presumed natures of man and woman. Apart from such essentialist discourses, we can ask about gendered body techniques of sleep. A candidate in this respect is the practice of co-sleeping, which has – as some would argue – become more prevalent recently, with the added stress on mothers due to an increased load of work and household duties. In co-sleeping, mothers, who intend to make the most of the little time they can devote to their children, share their bed with them. Co-sleeping, however, is not such a new development. It was well-known already in medieval times (Wittmer-Butsch, 1990: 19 et seqq.) and often blamed for the nightly death of infants. Interestingly, contemporary opponents of co-sleeping use this danger as an argument against a practice that has its historical precursors. Thus, co-sleeping is both effective and traditional to recall the Maussian terminology. Co-sleeping may very well be considered a gendered body technique of sleep – if not one that is gender-specific, at least one that is shaped by gender, as it is mostly mothers who engage in it.

### *Beyond Body Techniques*

So far, we have used the Maussian concept of body techniques of sleep to explore religious and historical variations of sleep. As a classificatory device, this concept has some merits. Perhaps more than anything else it satisfies the mind's craving for order. Yet, how much does it tell us about sleep? The concept seems to reveal too little: There are techniques of sleep and those of waking, so these two phenomena must be distinct in some way, but in order to ask how they are we will need to turn away from Maussian classification. In his introductory lectures on psychoanalysis, Freud (2000: 105 et seq.) defined sleep as a state in which I do not want to know anything about the outside world, in which my interest has been withdrawn from it<sup>35</sup>. Of course, Freud's main focus was on dreams, and it is through this route only that he arrives at sleep, with

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<sup>34</sup> Such gender stereotypes of sleep have come a long way. In Antiquity, sleep symbolised the opposite of virility and war. Sleep, a condition of extreme vulnerability, was seen as effeminate – whereas Great Men were supposed to sleep little and work at night. The Roman “Lucubratio”, i.e. the practice of working by candlelight, had a virile and virtuous connotation to it (Dowden 2003).

<sup>35</sup> Similarly, George Herbert Mead (1967: 30; 31) remarked that “sleep renders one inaccessible to the world” and described “the situation of a person going to sleep, distracting his attention or centring his attention – a partial or complete exclusion of certain parts of a field”. The aim of his discussion of sleep in this context is to differentiate meanings of consciousness.



dreams being the “life of the soul” (*Seelenleben*) during sleep and an intermediate state between waking and sleeping. While in his earlier *Interpretation of Dreams* Freud did not have much time for the merely physiological phenomenon of sleep, he now still points to its “physiological or biological” nature but characterises sleep *psychologically*: We cannot handle the world without taking temporary breaks from it, retreating into the womb of the mother and arranging our sleep as it was back then: warm, dark, and without any stimuli. A third of us – our sleeping selves – is yet unborn, according to Freud. And still there are stimuli during sleep, and dreams are our reactions to those.

We have gained a deeper understanding of why and how sleep cannot be reduced to a physiological phenomenon, thanks to Mauss. In order to overcome some of the limitations of a Maussian approach, let us now turn towards phenomenology. While dreams have been deemed to be the royal road to the unconscious, what about sleep and its relation to the conscious and unconscious? According to Johnstone (1973), a person who had never slept would not be able to know the difference between what being conscious and what being unconscious means. Presupposing a male agent, Johnstone argues that because he does not know what being unconscious means, he cannot know what being conscious means. Sleep figures in this as “a gap in the flow of my experience” (Johnstone, 1973: 75). Upon awakening one realises that the possibility of one’s experience was interrupted, and this interruption is unconsciousness, which refers to experience but not to personal identity. Sleep is a necessary, yet not a sufficient condition for the idea of consciousness as well as for the idea of death<sup>36</sup>, as death is permanent loss of consciousness. The hypothetical person who has never slept cannot be taught this experience by being shown an (unconscious) stone or other person. Machines cannot be self-conscious, because they cannot sleep. Johnstone concludes that “sleep, the interrupter and revealer of consciousness” (Op. cit.: 81) is necessary for human life, even if one day it will have ceased to be a biological necessity. The sleep-death relation was also invoked by Michel Foucault in his introduction to Ludwig Binswanger’s *Traum und Existenz*. Here, Foucault sees sleep playing the dead

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<sup>36</sup> Not only religious tradition, but also more recent sociological thought has made connections between sleep and death. One example for this is Truzzi’s (1968: 324) definition of both sleep and death as “terminating processes”. Fascinating as it is that his textbook had something, although not much, to say about sleep, this definition tends to stress similarities over dissimilarities (reversible sleep – irreversible death). More recently and by drawing on Zygmunt Bauman’s work, Simon Williams (2005: 96) has encouraged us to think of sleep as a ‘dress rehearsal’ for death, “a substitution ... of ‘reversible’ death and temporary disappearance for the irrevocable termination of life itself”. From a philosophical perspective, Hans Georg Gadamer (1977: 67) pondered the question but concluded that the metaphors for death, sleep and dream – which he managed to keep distinct from one another! – reinserted death into life and were thus indicative of philosophy’s unwillingness to face death.

person because of one's fear of death, yet being part of the order of life. Death is encountered at the basis of one's dreams as their meaning (Foucault, 1992: 52 et seqq.). Johnstone's line of theorising has been criticised, on the grounds that both it and the gap in sleep presuppose consciousness. He argues that "if we were not already aware of our own consciousness, then every period of sleep would result in total amnesia" (Galloway, 1977: 112). In his reply, Johnstone defends his position as being a schematic, not an empirical one. He speaks out for a "dialectical" notion of sleep and consciousness, and his conclusion is more convincing than Galloway's monocausal critique: "Without the negative moment of sleep, consciousness would remain a bare immediacy; it would in fact be unconscious. Consciousness emerges only as that knowledge of itself which has been won in negativity emerges" (Johnstone, 1977: 118). We speak of sleep retrospectively, and, as we should add, also prospectively. Another instance of this can be found in Merleau-Ponty's<sup>37</sup> (1962: 163 et seq.) account of falling asleep. The ritual narrated in this account has been redescribed by Crossley (2004: 8) as a "reflexive body technique", one of those techniques, "whose purpose is to achieve a transformation of embodied subjectivity". The idea of body management and its stress on reflexivity are modifications of the original Maussian concept. Due to these modifications, Crossley denies sleep the status of a body technique and views it as being mediated by body techniques instead. This seems to me to clearly mark a departure from Mauss's concept.<sup>38</sup> While Merleau-Ponty maintains that "the sleeper is never completely isolated within himself, never totally a sleeper" with an ongoing world that he is part of – the world being affirmed even in sleep<sup>39</sup> – and the possibility of waking up, Merleau-Ponty has little to say about *being* asleep. And what he has to say about it, contrasts with both Johnstone's and Galloway's positions, as these – despite all differences – do equally equate sleep and the unconscious. The contrasting

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<sup>37</sup> This is not the place for a detailed analysis of Merleau-Ponty's account, because our main interest here is to tackle the question of being asleep, not of falling asleep nor of waking up. However, since Merleau-Ponty stressed the role of our being our bodies and their anchoring us in the world – even in sleep through our dreaming of the world, it is not surprising that sociological sleep thinkers concerned with the body should be looking at him for theoretical guidance.

<sup>38</sup> Likewise, Crossley's (2004: 13) critique of Mauss's "sometimes" suggesting "that we are stuck for all time with whatever techniques and rituals of sleep we happen to have acquired as a function of our personal history" does not seem quite fair, given the fact that in the relevant paragraph of his essay, Mauss remembers how his sleep has changed in the war situation. Regarding habitualised or ritualised practices of going to sleep, an interesting parallel can be found in Freud's (2000) concept of a *Schlafzeremoniell* or a sleep ceremonial: The 'normal' person's ceremonial is adjustable according to circumstances, whereas the one of the pathological person is not.

<sup>39</sup> As Merleau-Ponty (1970: 47 et seq.) declared in one of his lectures: "The negation of the world in sleep is equally a way of upholding it, and thus sleeping consciousness is not a recess of pure nothingness: it is cluttered with the debris of the past and present; it plays among it". And it is still consciousness!

point offered by Merleau-Ponty claims that bodily perception as basic motor intentionality is continuous.<sup>40</sup> Compared with this account of continuity, Schütz/Luckmann (2003) stress the discontinuity: The everyday life-world is found as given to the waking subject; in sleep, s/he gives up the natural attitude and pragmatic interest. Sleep is defined as “complete relaxation of consciousness and linked with a complete turning away from life” (Op. cit.: 66, transl. AF). There are perceptions, but all of them remain passive ones – devoid of the activities of hearing and seeing that would transform them into apperceptions. Thence the explorations venture into the dream-world. Sleep and dream are drawn closely together: One of the shock experiences making one aware of different finite provinces of meaning is mentioned in “the shock of falling asleep as the leap into the world of dreams” (Schutz, 1962: 231). The temporal foundation of sleep as an experience of transcendence is stated: world time transcends my time, as I become aware of when waking up in the morning by realising that world time has moved on, while my own time stood still for the time spent asleep. The issue of transcendence is given another twist, when small, middle and great transcendences<sup>41</sup> are distinguished according to the degree of possibility of experiencing the non-experienced that is indicated by the experience one actually makes. In this schema, sleep figures as one of the great transcendences, as there is an absolute impossibility of experiencing the non-experienced. I can dream in sleep, and in dream I can act, so there is a kind of boundary transgression, very different from the one within everyday life and one from which one cannot take anything but reminiscences and hints. However, Merleau-Ponty (1962: 146) points us in a direction worth following by accentuating the role of the body. It is the body that brings about the “metamorphosis” from waking to sleep and: “It transforms ideas into things, and my mimicry of sleep into real sleep.”

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<sup>40</sup> How this motor intentionality works in sleep has been exemplified by Richard Shusterman (2005: 157): “Consider our breathing while we sleep. If an object such as a pillow comes to block our breathing, we will typically turn our heads or push the object away while continuing to sleep, thus unconsciously adjusting our behavior in terms of what is unconsciously grasped”. This example has consequences for the idea of non-consciousness, consequences that remain ambiguous within Merleau-Ponty’s thought, for “it would seem that purposeful action in sleep should be construed as the actions of consciousness. One could then wonder to what extent we can ever speak of unconscious human acts or intentions. On the other hand, Merleau-Ponty sometimes speaks of consciousness as if it demanded a further ‘constituting’ function” (Op. cit.: 179, fn. 3).

<sup>41</sup> These distinctions have been further refined on different occasions by Thomas Luckmann. His assumption that the individual knows that s/he is going to wake up again is problematic, as it seems to confuse the objective reversibility of sleep with subjective knowledge. On the other hand, he is well aware of the fact that this is a matter of habit, and that if habit gets lost we may become aware of the possibility that we will not wake up again (Luckmann, 1996: 167).

Emphasis on the body has been further pursued in Drew Leder's (1990) attempt at thinking sleep as a form of "bodily dys-appearance". This neologistic way of putting it is worth bearing in mind and links up with Johnstone's insistence on the "gap" and "negativity". Yet, it is also worth remembering that sleep is not necessarily a nightly process, as Leder suggests, and that bodies at day do not have to be wakeful ones just as bodies at night are not *per se* sleeping ones (Williams, S., 2005: 71). While this objection is fully justified within its context, at the other end we find accounts of the night that have hardly anything to say about sleep at all. A case in point is Elisabeth Bronfen's (2008) recent cultural history<sup>42</sup> of the night with its first sentence stating that night is not only for sleep. This sets the theme: Night is needed for exploring hidden worlds and for talking about them<sup>43</sup>, in short for doing all sorts of things – except sleep. "The sleeping body ... partakes of all aspects of depth disappearance. It disappears from perception and command, from self and Other, as a result of its withdrawal from the sensorimotor circuit" (Leder, 1990: 58). This withdrawal is imputed to others, whom I observe as sleepers, or to myself *ex post* or *ex ante*, but: "My own sleeping body is one thing I will never directly see. Where 'it' is, 'I', as conscious, perceiving subject, necessarily am not" (Ibd.).

In a way these different approaches point us towards the limits of what can be said about sleep, more precisely about being asleep, phenomenologically speaking. Having said earlier that the concept of body techniques seems to reveal too little, it is now time to add that, on the other hand, it also seems to reveal too much. Of course, it depends on the research question at hand and on one's interests, but if we are interested in those conditions in which the sleeping human being has been a debased, enslaved, abandoned, despicable being – to paraphrase Marx –, then the conceptual instrument of body techniques is not fine-tuned enough for us to chart our course. The situation of one's body (or "Leib") in the world makes sleep necessary for human beings (Schutz/Luckmann, 2003: 288). In other words, if we want to understand sleep we have to grasp its characteristics as a specific *need*. Thinking of sleep as a human need may point us beyond the limits of phenomenology. While this is not the place to ponder

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<sup>42</sup> Another recent example from the genre of 'cultural history' is Eluned Summers-Bremner's (2008) book on insomnia, from Gilgamesh onwards, a plea for 'nocturnal literacy', i.e. "awareness of the complex interactions of different kinds of darkness in their own right" (op. cit.: 8).

<sup>43</sup> In Bronfen's (2008: 175) own words this reads as follows: "Wir brauchen die Nacht – so die Wette dieses Buches – um verborgene, verbotene und vergessene Welten zu erforschen und von ihnen zu sprechen." The notion of culture undergirding this type of 'cultural history' is a rather high-brow one, with its topics ranging from opera, through Shakespeare, Freud, *film noir*, to George Eliot and Virginia Woolf.

different conflicting theories of need, conceptualising sleep as a need would allow us to flesh out a materialist grounding for theorising sleep. At the same time needs do not appear as mere givens. Whatever their biological foundation, as social researchers we encounter them as social constructions. The necessities of human life are always already matters of cultural concern and cannot be reduced to any demands of nature: Needs have been schematised and produced with a plan in mind and they can change substantially even at the basic level of nutrition, clothing and housing. The quantity of the new may translate into a different quality of what had been misrecognised as invariant (Adorno, 1997c: 221). Yet, the drives are socially mediated and their being natural does not appear immediately so, but it can be grasped only qua its being produced by society (Adorno, 1997d), in our case produced by a class society. According to Adorno, we cannot distinguish *a priori* between good and bad or true and false/faked needs within this societal framework. Likewise, it would be hard to claim and substantiate that we can distinguish between necessary repression of excessive sleep and its unnecessary surplus repression. In Adorno's early text on need, there is still a hope for classless society with an unfolding of productivity and an end to conformity as well as an overcoming of the logic of utility. Uselessness would have ceased being shameful: The unsatisfied need would not, no longer, seek the useless to gain satisfaction, but the satisfied need would be able to relate to the world without drilling and disciplining it through universal utility<sup>44</sup> (Adorno, 1997d: 396). It is these processes of drilling and disciplining that I am interested in, the constructions of sleep disciplines. In the next chapter we shall see how arguments about sleep as a need figure in contemporary debates on whether we sleep too little or otherwise deficiently.

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<sup>44</sup> "Dass etwas unnütz sei, ist dann keine Schande mehr. Anpassung verliert ihren Sinn. Die Produktivität wird nun erst im eigentlichen, nicht entstellten Sinn aufs Bedürfnis wirken: nicht indem das unbefriedigte mit Unnützem sich stillen lässt, sondern indem das gestillte vermag, zur Welt sich zu verhalten, ohne sie durch universale Nützlichkeit zuzurichten."

### **3 Diagnoses and Therapies of an 'Unslept' Society: Contemporary Sleep Debates**

While in the previous chapter we mostly looked at sleep in historical perspective combined with some considerations on religion and social theory, this one brings to the fore contemporary debates about sleep in modern, late capitalist society. These link back to the sleep that was, and they discuss the question whether we have actually lost sleep or not. In line with our interest in discipline, we will first look at sleep deprivation and discipline. Then we shall see how the sleep that we get is gendered as well as shaped by other social factors. This brings us on to contemporary debates about sleep and the ways in which it is medicalised and/or healthicised. Shifting focus from sleep to society, we will ask whether, with the growing interest in sleep, society has become sleepicised, as Simon J. Williams (2005) has suggested. Taking a step back, medical/ised sleep is briefly examined, before pondering the pros and cons of the diagnosis of a sleep-deprived society. From the diagnosis we turn to the therapies of sleep offered and the ways in which they interpellate sleep-seeking subjects. Finally, we shall examine the role of religious rhetoric in these discourses.

Apparently more and more of us are 'tatt', which means "tired all the time"; but maybe we have just come to be more concerned about our energetic wakefulness as well as more willing to medicalise ourselves? A range of positions have been developed in these debates: From the cultural critique claiming that we have turned into an 'unslept' or at least 'badly slept' society, to the in turn critical point that the sleep of times past was not as undisturbed and idyllic as it might seem and that therefore the diagnosis of societal sleep loss is mistaken. Another position worth pondering suggests that mushrooming media reports on insomnia produce themselves what they pretend to diagnose, with a growing popular anxiety about the sleep one gets or does not get as a consequence. Apparently, this anxiety is not such a recent phenomenon. The journalist H. Addington Bruce (1915: 156) already suggested that "'Insomnophobia', or fear of insomnia, is in truth one of the most frequent causes of chronic sleeplessness". Given the date of this statement, current media-bashing pronouncements, ironically made in the same media that are the object of the attack, are hardly convincing. If this sort of phobia is all there is to our sleep problems, then the remedy is easily found. It addresses the individual and his/her way of thinking and behaving. Cognitive

behavioural therapy is the method of choice, and it is comparatively inexpensive. And somehow this remedy also had come to the earlier journalist's mind already: Re-educating the insomniac is needed, "above all, instructing him in the principles of right thinking" (Bruce, 1915: 214).

### *Sleep Deprivation, Discipline and Disorders*

The opening scene of the movie *The Lives of Others* (2006) introduces State Security (Stasi) officer Wiesler as a ruthless representative of his state, the German Democratic Republic. He is shown interviewing a prisoner, who is supposed to reveal information about someone who fled to the West, and how he re-tells the story of this finally 'successful' interview to students in a lecture theatre to instruct them in interrogation techniques. One element of these techniques is sleep deprivation, for as Wiesler proclaims to his students: "The enemies of our state are arrogant, and we need to have patience with them, patience for about forty hours" (transl. AF). These are the forty hours of recommended sleep deprivation. Approached by a student about the inhumane character of such treatment, Wiesler promptly check-marks the student's name. His professed belief that the guilty person will calm down, while the innocent one gets angrier and that the liars always fall back on the same sentences reconfirms the technique of sleep deprivation used, that is: a classical technique of torture. As such it was already used in Roman times: The Roman general Regulus was said to have been killed by sleep deprivation, which he suffered from the hands of the Carthaginians. In the Middle Ages it took on demonological implications, and more recently US soldiers used this method in Iraq. Military vocabulary has shaped our ways of thinking about and dealing with sleep. There are, for instance, "sleep management strategies" and "unit sleep plans" (Williams, 2005: 121). A curtailing of sleeping hours was, for example, part of a Soviet sleep programme aimed at workers' getting by on only four hours of sleep per night and at their working longer hours than before (Hobson, 1995: 115). Religious cults have also been known for using sleep deprivation to control their members (Valatx 1994). Effects of sleep deprivation include mood problems, unstable psychomotor activity, somatic and visual problems, disorganised thought, tachycardia and hyperthermia. Other bodily disturbances and abnormalities may also occur. Sleep deprivation as part of a cultic lifestyle can "under the pretext of asceticism, ... be a factor

in conditioning people” (Op. cit.: 215). The lethal consequences of extended sleep deprivation have been studied in rats by Alan Rechtschaffen in 1983 (Hobson, 1995: 114). Animal experiments were already conducted on puppies in the late nineteenth-century; yet, their subjects were no luckier than the rats and died within four to five days. Extended sleep deprivation will trigger psychotic symptoms such as hallucinations, as has been shown by the Randy-Gardner experiment, in which said human subject went without sleep for eleven days. On the other hand, well-dosed sleep deprivation may ease the symptoms in depressed patients. Depression can also occur as a consequence of extended sleep problems as can addictions of various sorts. Insomnia and depression have been found to be co-morbid, but the causal direction of this correlation is unknown. Sleep deprivation combined with medication has been found to have an improving effect on depression, while mania may be avoided through sleep, as manic sleep reduction may intensify the symptoms. The reasons for this are not yet agreed upon: The patients’ expectations and their socialising with other participants could be factors in an experimental setting. It has also been suggested that REM sleep deprivation as deprivation of heat has a cooling effect, which may be the determining factor (Wehr 1990). There are other factors contributing to disturbed sleep apart from direct, forced sleep deprivation. So, for instance, disturbed sleep can be correlated to anxieties, as a study of Brazilian children who fear for their lives due to the presence of death squads, suggests (Dollinger et al. 1996). Insomnia in general can have a variety of causes, and even where an amount of sleep is reached that could be sufficient this is not a guarantee for restorative sleep. Thus the concept of non-restorative sleep encompasses far more phenomena and conditions than insomnia plain and simple. It has also been suggested that it is not insomnia but excessive daytime sleepiness that is the major sleep-related complaint of the day. While this could be due to insufficient or otherwise non-restorative sleep, it may be the result of an underlying condition, such as narcolepsy or sleep apnea<sup>45</sup>. Other behaviour such as somnambulism, while obviously somehow related to sleep as the popular term ‘sleep walking’ suggests, is not a phenomenon of sleep but of waking-up. For our purpose, it will be important to bear in mind that sleep deprivation and sleep discipline are analytically distinct categories. Empirically they often overlap, in so far as many, if not most, sleep disciplines aim at sleep depriving effects. However, this is not necessarily so: Sleep advice, for instance, that encourages long sleepers to find and follow their

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<sup>45</sup> For an account of sleep apnea as a social construction drawing on both medical and sociological research, see: Herrmann 1997.



daily rhythms implies a potential extension of actual sleeping hours for a given subject. It still requires sleep discipline. On the other hand, the ideal type of sleep discipline is one of sleep deprivation – and it is this ideal type that the individualising tendencies of recent sleep advice are up against, while they share the former's urge for instrumental rationality.

On a more cheerful note, more recently the bedroom has advanced to being a matter of a plurality of lifestyles and tastes, as propagated by the advertising industry. A recent study based on an analysis of journals (Jung/Müller-Doohm 1996) catering for those intent on improving their experiences at home has found that sleep is marginalised by the contemporary culture of the bedroom. Instead, the bedroom is presented as a space of self-expression. This mode of presentation tends to de-differentiate the spheres of living room and bedroom. However, this process of de-differentiation is far from being uncontested. Thus, while Jung and Müller-Doohm point to an advertisement featuring a young man, the successful type, in bed with his laptop computer and the slogan "Everything is permitted in bed"<sup>46</sup>, this message of the advertising industry is contradicted by the fervour of popularised sleep science and its media amplifications. They seem to proclaim an alternative message: "Nothing is allowed in bed – except sleep and sex", thus implicitly reinforcing the differentiation of spaces for sleeping (and sexual activity) on the one hand and daytime living on the other.

Referring back to the last chapter, new body techniques of sleep/ing have been developed in the battle against sleep disorders. Some of these may have been with us for centuries, while others are likely to be a side-effect of the modern way of life. To refer only to the two most influential thinkers about sleep in pre-modern times, Aristotle and Galen<sup>47</sup>, who distinguished between dietetics and pathology of sleep. Aristotle knew about fainting and confusion as well as epileptic seizures in sleep, while Galen contrasted comatose sleep and insomnia, which was often linked to melancholy (on this and with a focus on medieval sleep dietetics see: Lauer 1998). In spite of these historical reference points, overall the medical discovery of sleep disorders has been a rather recent affair: Many sleep disorders, like e.g. narcolepsy, have been detected and defined only from the late nineteenth-century onwards (Thorpy 2001). And some are

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<sup>46</sup> The slogan in its entirety is not that permissive at all: In brackets it adds "except for boredom". Thus, not everything is permitted in bed.

<sup>47</sup> On the influence of Aristotelian and Galenian thought on English late Renaissance ideas of sleep, particularly on the preference given to Galen over Aristotle in locating the physiological cause of sleep in the brain rather than in the heart, see: Dannenfeldt 1986.

even more recent inventions or discoveries, depending on one's penchant for a constructionist or a realist position. 'Sexsomnia', for instance, is such a phenomenon. It may be particularly unwelcome to the person on whom his/her bedfellow tries to perform sexual acts while asleep. Yet, this is only one example. Not only do these disorders, from one's first suspicion to a confirmed diagnosis, create an awareness of and focus on sleep, they require certain types of action to be taken – be it the consumption of medication to deal with a specific condition or the handling of a mask, as in the case of sleep apnea. If these types of action establish a tradition, in addition to their effectiveness, they might very well become worthy of our attention as new body techniques of sleep/ing. Their significance for the subjects concerned is not to be underestimated. Such treatments may lead to a completely new experience of sleep and life, one's own and the experience of others.

### *Gendered Sleep and Other Factors*

Sleep is socially distributed in different ways according to age, gender and social class (Taylor, B., 1993). While sleep has been praised as the 'Great Leveller', since both rich and poor have got to sleep at times, rich and poor do not do so in the same ways. Similarly, gender is a noteworthy aspect of structured social inequalities in sleep. Allison Pugh (2000: 260 et seq.) unfolded the notion of sleep as care with women as care-givers in a societal context marked by "the intense celebrated repression of sleep as an activity – indeed the raising of that repression to mythic status". Mothers co-sleeping with their babies due to time constraints accommodate themselves to the societal rule of sleeplessness. Yet, even in doing so they are regulated, in this case by a discourse of risk around sudden infant death and its possible causal links with the practice of co-sleeping. The exact nature of the observed link has been disputed. Martin (2003: 328) claims that it cannot be generalised unless other factors like alcohol and tobacco come into play as well. Medical concerns and social expectations are both ways of disciplining, here: female, bodies. Women in midlife (studied were women 40 to 59 years old in the UK) report a diminished quality of, often disrupted sleep, in which they continue to act out multiple roles for others, such as partners and children. Far from being a haven of repose, for them the bedroom is an 'invisible workplace' (Hislop/Arber, 2003a: 703, 704) that requires a pragmatic response. It may even be a "battleground" for sleeping rights.<sup>48</sup> In addition to and never too far from gendered

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<sup>48</sup> Using Hislop and Arber's work as 'empirical indicator', Meadows (2005) proposes to conceptualise sleep through negotiation with self and others taking into account one's sleep expectations, roles, and

realities, there are stereotypes of gender. These can be detected in sociological work on sleep, for example in the sociology of education. More a piece of advice than of sociological analysis, Ethel A. Grosscup (1931: 246) has “the high-strung, overexcitable girl” who sacrifices sleep for the joy of dancing and thus “looks old before her time” vis-à-vis- “some eminent and highly intellectual men”. While some could do with only little sleep, most people cannot and need it for efficiency’s sake. The utilitarian argument prevails. Grosscup’s assumption that the brain’s activity requires a break has been proven wrong on neuro-physiological grounds, as sleep is not a break strictly speaking. Her plea for the necessity of sleeping alone because of frequent body movements or changes in sleeping posture and to avoid harming the other’s sleep, possibly a hidden moral agenda masquerading as science, may feel strange to those whose subjective perception of good sleep includes having someone to, literally, sleep with. Nevertheless, Grosscup’s sleep-to-be-fit line of reasoning is still very much relevant today, perhaps more so than it was at her time. The woman/mother’s responsibility for the child’s sleep has been typically prefigured in Mary, mother of Jesus, and the gendered idyll of the holy family. The Christmas carol *The Virgin’s Cradle Hymn*, with Mary lulling Jesus into sleep (“Dormi, Iesu”), is an example of this imagery, stating the mother’s dependence on the child’s well-being and obedience (“si non dormis, mater plorat”) – effectively thus presenting the mother as victim of (the child’s) sleep or sleeplessness. Within the context of these less benign aspects and uses of sleep, sleep as a means of punishment is to be mentioned. Disrespectful children and teenagers are sent to bed early, and for them this imposed ‘sleep’ – at least a form of social sleep, whether it is actually also one of biological sleep will differ from case to case – is certainly not a blessing but a curse. In addition to gender and age, sexuality has an impact on sleep. Media coverage of sleep tends to transport heteronormative assumptions. The straight couple and the ‘marital bed’ are the focus of many newspaper reports in the UK (Lowe et al. 2007) – but certainly elsewhere, too.

Current debates on sleep, however, tend to refer to the medical arena for clarification: Science tells us, even where the media actually do, what sleep is, what it ought to be like, and what we are supposed to do to get it right and be our own competent sleep managers.

### *Medicalisation and/or Healthicisation of Sleep – Sleepicisation of Society?*

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context. His framework is clearly micro-sociological as he claims that: “The aim of a sociology of sleep is to target and understand this negotiation” (Op. cit.: 252).

In medical sociology, debates about the current state and the future of health and illness have surrounded the concepts of medicalisation and healthicisation for a while. More recently, the question of applicability of these concepts to sleep has been posed. While ‘medicalisation’ transforms the moral into the medical, ‘healthicisation’ turns health into a moral value and responsibility. Both processes, captured by the respective concepts, can be observed in the social world of sleep: From problematic sleep to sleep disorders, medical expertise and agency are required, particularly in the form of specialist sleep clinics, which have come to be a favourite topic for media documentaries. At the same time, however, the burden on the individuals that comes with the healthicisation of sleep is also clearly visible. In this there might be, as Williams (2005: 154) puts it, a trend towards a “new form of governmentality ... in the name of health, happiness and the wisdom and virtue of a ‘well-slept’ life”. In fact, medicalisation and healthicisation seem to go hand in hand, as Hislop and Arber (2003b: 834) have found: “Rather than being a true reflection of a shift in approach to sleep management, the trend to healthization has in effect provided a bridge between self-directed strategies and medicalization”. They claim that women nowadays have more options available to them and that they use them in personalised ways. Yet, where do we go if we want to go beyond healthicisation and medicalisation? Simon J. Williams (2005: 265) has suggested the concept of sleepicisation, which he explains as such: “The sleepicisation of society, ... aided and abetted by the media, has the power or potential to permeate all spheres and spaces of society, and to translate all manners of social and medical ‘problems’ into sleep-related matters.” Furthermore, in certain segments of contemporary culture we can observe a fetishisation of sleep (Op. cit.: 163), and, thinking for instance of law efforts in several US states, even a criminalisation of sleep or, more precisely, of sleepiness seems to be taking place. Sleep/iness has become a biopolitical concern. These tendencies have also been found in UK media, thus “questions concerning the moral responsibility, if not legal culpability, of sleepy drivers add a further important dimension to the media framing of the sleep/work relationship and the sense of ‘crisis’ it engenders” (Boden et al., 2008: 553). Issues of social class are evident in media discourses when “the tendency of certain lower-class workers to have their sleep/work habits more closely scrutinized and regulated shows how discourses surrounding sleep can act in a regulatory and disciplinary manner” (Op. cit.: 555).

Precursors to healthicisation with health as moral value and individual responsibility can be found in some Christian disciplines, especially those which are more pronounced in their orientation towards utility. Even if health does not figure as

a supreme value in these contexts, the moralising gesture of the disciplinary code points to interesting analogies with contemporary discourses on healthy sleep habits. The medicalisation of sleep is not such a recent phenomenon, either. As far back as the second half of the sixteenth century, in his *Essays* Michel de Montaigne referred the matter of sleep to the medical authorities: It was up to the doctors to decide whether we are depending on sleep for life. The historical accounts are ambiguous on this question. While Perseus, imprisoned in Rome, is said to have been killed by sleep deprivation, Pliny the Elder mentioned people who managed to live for a long time without sleep. Herodotos tells of a people whose male members sleep and wake alternately for half a year. Epimenides, by contrast, is supposed to have been asleep for fifty-seven years (Montaigne, 1998: I: 44; 139).

Compared with healthicisation and medicalisation, the sleepicisation of society, if taken for anything more than the latest twist in the game of inventing neologisms, new *-isations* as it were, seems to be a rather recent development. Rigorously applied, the concept has to include the sleep-researching sociologist him- or herself. This study could be read as contributing to sleepicisation, even if its stated aim was to argue against it, which it is not. Talking of sleepicisation, medicalisation and healthicisation brings up the question what sleep is according to the authorities that are generally held to be able to define it, medical ones. The authority to define sleep has been transferred to medicine, just as had the authority to define what sex is, and what its pathologies and classifications look like. Foucault (1976: 56) has suggested that in earlier times it had been the church that watched over conjugal pleasure, but its interventions have been weakened in the past two hundred years, whereas medical authority has gained importance in matters of sex. It is tempting to draw some parallel lines between sleep and sex – at least as far as the question of defining authorities and the transfer from religion to medicine is concerned. However, we should bear in mind that the histories of sex and sleep produce quite different stories. This is not only a historical, but also a systematic issue: The place of sex in the webs of power/knowledge is a place that sleep could never have aspired to occupying. And the systematic reason for why this is so is exactly the one why I am interested in sleep: It is about as far from action, production and pro-creation as it gets. Apart from dreams, sleep is non-creation. This is where its provocation lies. Yet, what does science tell us about the nature of sleep?

### *Medical/ised Sleep*

From a medical perspective, J. Allan Hobson (2001: 628) defines sleep as “a complex behaviour that is an integral part of the body’s strategic adaptation to daily changes in light and temperature”. As a multi-faceted phenomenon it is

“a behaviour characterized by postural immobility (but with periodic changes in body position and muscle tone), by decreased response to external stimuli (but with marked fluctuations in threshold to response), by selective sensitivity to some stimuli, and by an orderly sequence of electrical and chemical changes in the brain that affect the entire body and greatly alter the mind” (Ibd.).

Energy and information management are functions of sleep, which is only found in animals with highly developed brains and is, unlike hibernation, an active state of brain. It is also “the body’s own best state of defense against infection and its most productive state of growth and development” (Hobson, 1995: xiv). Sleep needs differ individually, with short-sleepers needing three to five hours and long-sleepers requiring as many as eight to eleven hours. “Society, with its interest in tight schedules and productivity, is kind to short but merciless to long-sleepers” (Ibd.). The moral condemnation of long sleepers is palpable in the popular saying: “Six for a man, seven for a woman, eight for a fool. Nature requires five, custom takes seven, laziness nine, and wickedness eleven” (Wright, 2004: 194). Not only does the amount of the sleep one needs vary, humans’ biological clocks tick differently: The chronotypes of so-called larks and owls are different. While the larks seek sleep early at night and get up early in the morning, the owls feel tiredness later and consequently get up later in the day. Apparently, we are born as either a lark or an owl, and social engineering tells us to get jobs and find partners suiting our larkish or owlsh natures. On the other hand, this means that for certain shifts in shift-work only compatible chronotypes should be recruited, a normative suggestion issued by medical authority. That shift-work affects sleep and general health in negative ways has been shown in several studies. What about the ways in which those of us who do work shifts as well as those of us who do not think and feel about as well as practise sleep? What about the society we live, sleep and die in? Is it a sleep-deprived society? And what does it mean to say it is or it is not, beyond a certain statistically established number of – possibly – sleep-deprived individuals?

*Are We Living in a Sleep-Deprived Society?*

“We are the great unslept” (Martin, 2003: 346).

About every fourth British adult is supposed to suffer from a chronic lack of sleep. Even conservative estimates give ten to fifteen percent of the population as displaying excessive daytime sleepiness (see: Williams, 2005: 102). These figures are based on respondents’ subjective perceptions. In a diachronic perspective, it is assumed that we tend to sleep between one-and-a-half and two hours less than people did a hundred years ago, and on the synchronic level it is claimed that there is “little doubt that most adults, in the USA, UK and other industrialised nations get substantially less than eight hours sleep most nights of the week and many get less than seven” (Martin, 2003: 22). Such facts and figures have given rise to the assumption that in the West we – national differences notwithstanding – are chronically sleep-deprived or living in a sleep-deprived society. However, such claims have not gone uncontested: If they assume a past Golden Age of sleep, they tend to neglect that the sleep of days past was far from undisturbed (Ekirch 2006). On a different level, Harrison and Horne (1995) have argued against the general diagnosis of a chronically sleep-deprived society by claiming that more sleep is not a necessity for most people, even though they could sleep more than is biologically needed. Against this position, Bonnet and Arand (1995: 910) hold that “there is currently no way to determine what sleep may be excess and what may be required” and that “chronic sleep loss is the norm and not the exception”. Whatever the outcome of the medical experts’ debate may be, people left to their own sleep spend on average nine to ten hours on it. This is more than they usually get according to statistical evidence.

Time budget research seems to be a good candidate to turn to for this question, but it has paid little attention to sleep and other personal needs (Garhammer, 1999: 377). There are, however, some illuminating data at hand: Singles in the US tend to get less sleep than married couples, as do working Germans in comparison with the non-working population. Generally speaking, people sleep about thirty minutes less per night than they did in the 1970s and almost two hours less than about a century ago (Op. cit.: 379). Sleeping-in on Sundays is popular, and the night to Monday tends to be less restorative than others because work is anticipated. Having said that, duration and quality of sleep are not identical. On average, women sleep longer than men. Sleeping with a partner feels better subjectively, while objectively such sleep fares worse.<sup>49</sup> According to a representative survey of 1064 over 16-year olds published by the

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<sup>49</sup> This highlights the difference between objective condition and subjective perception, a difference already remarked upon by Max Weber (1995: 171) in terms of subjective tiredness and objective fatigue in his study on the ‘psycho-physics of industrial labour’.

Allensbach Institute (2003), Germans need on average seven-and-a-half hours of sleep. However, more than half of the women stated that they needed at least eight hours, whereas only thirty-nine percent of the male respondents said so. Sleep is associated mostly with ideas of regeneration, health, vitality, switching off stress, but also with peace, enjoyment and luxury, the latter especially so for the self-employed and freelancers as well as for a proportion of those suffering from sleep disorders. The study also found that the perception that one is not getting sufficient sleep had dropped within the last two-and-a-half years by about ten percent. Still forty-two percent of respondents reported insufficient sleep.

The idea that we are surrounded by ‘sleep thieves’ has been recently popularised by Stanley Coren’s (1997) book title, but that sleep is a good that can be robbed and stolen was already part of Grosscup’s (1931: 245) argument, when she complained about the adults’ depriving their young ones of sleep. The most-often cited culprit is the light-bulb, the invention of which served to extend our days and shorten our nights. Institutions can work as sleep thieves as well. Institutionalised sleep patterns can be studied in prisons, hospitals, and nursing homes. In one of the latter, normative assumptions about sleep and laziness distinguish between staying in bed all day (bad) and napping in the lobby (acceptable), thus placing those who stay awake more “on the right side of the great dividing line between ‘doing something’ and ‘doing nothing’ with one’s life” (Williams, 2005: 130). In a similar vein, sleeping is forbidden in the day-time centres for homeless people Peter Rensen (2003) studied in Amsterdam. Many of them are sent away if they do not conform to this rule, “because a sleeping homeless person in a day activity shelter demotivates the others (Op. cit.: 104). Monasteries give perhaps the most prominent historical example of a sleep-thief institution. Shift-work is another one of these sleep thieves. In Germany, about ten percent of the working population are engaged in this form of work. Working non-standard hours deprives one of sleep as does staying up to look after children. Sleep cycles and through them body temperature and hormone levels are affected as is interaction with family members and friends who live on a different schedule, thus adding further stress and potential health problems for the working subject (Presser 2004). Shift-workers deviate from the standard sleep role<sup>50</sup>, because they do not and cannot conform to the

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<sup>50</sup> On the Parsonian concept of the sleep role modelled after the sick role, with its rights and obligations, see Schwartz 1970 and Williams, 2005: 73 et seqq. Talcott Parsons (1951: 396) viewed sleep as “clearly one of the most fundamental of ... tension release phenomena, which though it has biological foundations is nevertheless profoundly influenced by interaction at the socio-cultural level”. It is instructive to bear in mind the immediate context of this statement, that there is “the occurrence of a variety of rhythmic cycles of effort and rest, of discipline and permissive release and the like” (Ibd.). The point of this study is that rest does not come without effort, and permissive release is always already shaped by discipline.



prescription of sleep as a night-time 'activity'. They are not accorded the same rights and privileges that are usually enjoyed by sleepers (Williams, S., 2007: 323). And they tend to stick to their sleep rhythms even when retired. Apart from the sleep problems of shift workers, the UK newspaper *The Guardian* has observed what it calls a 'slumber divide' between different professions, with solicitors getting the most (7.8 hours) and Members of Parliament the least (5.2 hours) amount of sleep per night. As professions are internally stratified, there is evidence for a further divide within them, as has been exemplified by the case of doctors in the UK (Boden et al. 2008). Not only have the media discovered sleep as a problem, social agents choose them to make sense of their sleep issues. Thus "it appears likely that popular media are a salient source of knowledge about health and disease among non-experts in an historical era increasingly organised around the authority of texts" (Kroll-Smith, 2004: 111). In this context, sleepiness – or more precisely: excessive daytime sleepiness – has been since the 1990s redescribed as a dangerous condition both in print media and on the world wide web, thereby "creating a new language game for making sense of ... temporal rhythms of the body (Op. cit.: 113). While this analysis refers to the United States, its relevance for Europe can hardly be disputed.

"Excessive daytime sleepiness is represented in the popular media as a distinct medical disorder marked by a diminished level of vigilance at socially inappropriate times. Moreover, it is characterised as morally inappropriate signaling the need for personal, if not civil intervention" (Kroll-Smith, 2004: 120).

Kroll-Smith, drawing on Zygmunt Bauman, diagnoses a post-panoptical society with medicine as an at once alive and dead 'Zombie institution': The "medical gaze will continue, but not in the near-perfect form of a Panoptical society" (Op. cit.: 121). The media represent an alternative authority appropriating medical knowledge. In them, two narrative themes have been discovered: "(1) sleepiness is a measurable somatic condition that poses a risk to self and other and (2) maintaining alertness and lucidity is both a personal and moral responsibility. These two claims on drowsy states of consciousness combine to make a new truth about sleepiness and the sleepy person" (Kroll-Smith/Gunter, 2005: 353). In terms of bodies this reads as: "Alert bodies ... are productive and less likely to make mistakes. Somnolent bodies, on the other hand, are less productive and more prone to mental lapses and errors (Op. cit.: 361). In this context, the use of new media, such as the World Wide Web, is to be mentioned. It plays a role not only in searching for and retrieving sleep-related information, but through forums and discussion boards in sharing personal health details, too. The interpretation of those surpasses the realm of medical explanation, as has been

demonstrated in a study on sleep paralysis discussants of an electronic bulletin board (Weissgerber 2004). Here, it has been found, religious and paranormal constructions of the condition are more prevalent than medical ones. While on the one hand this development may be welcomed as freeing subjects from medical authority, its rejection and an accompanying unwillingness to seek professional treatment encourage some scepticism: Perhaps, the internet users' autonomy is a mixed blessing. The pharmaceutical industry profits from those who are willing and perhaps even eager to self-medicate: Modafinil, the active ingredient in Provigil, was originally developed for treating narcoleptics. It is nowadays used against shift-work sleep disorders, but also beyond this scope by healthy individuals, simply to fend off unwelcome sleep. And medical progress is not going to stop there: Some researchers predict that within only a few decades sleep will be pharmacologically reduced to only two hours within the twenty-four. If there is a way to switch off sleep, chances are it will be taken and maybe then work naps will not be needed any longer. For the time being, "both sleep deprivation and sleep promotion can be used in the service of corporate governance – a governance that ... operates within the seemingly personal realm of human health", as Megan Brown (2004: 186) has observed recently. Media coverage of Modafinil has ranged from uncritical celebration to more sceptical or critical reports. In this context, Williams et al. (2009) speak of a 'pharmaceuticalisation', a term at the same time more specific than 'medicalisation' as well as transcending the purely medical domain.

### *Sleep Therapies*

"Short multiple napping techniques can reduce total sleep need to as little as two to three hours per twenty-four for weeks on end without deteriorating performance; special bright artificial lights can suppress sleepiness even in the middle of the night; and performance can be enhanced by prophylactic napping. Scheduling of sleep and design of the sleeping environment can improve the quality of recovery sleep. And choosing the correct timing of waking from sleep can significantly affect grogginess (sleep inertia) on awakening" (Moore-Ede, 1993: 137).

Circadian consultant Martin Moore-Ede is one of the numerous authors who list the catastrophic consequences of sleepiness. Major disasters can be attributed to workers who suddenly fall asleep on the job or are too tired to stay focussed. Therefore, 'alertness' and its management are required, if we follow a certain kind of literature. Moore-Ede's (1993: 141) ideas have a mechanistic ring to them. For him, the human being functions like or even as a machine. He describes the measurable state of brain activation as one "that renders your brain either a smoothly running machine or a

barely cranking engine misfiring on all cylinders.” According to him, tired employees are to be kept alert in a most methodical manner:

“Increasing the work load, requesting the individual to perform extra but necessary tasks, is a way both to stimulate alertness and at the same time to diagnose performance impairment. It cannot be a meaningless exercise that the operator ‘sees through’, but rather a set of tasks that must be done periodically anyway. The alertness/attentiveness monitors just select the times the operator has to do the task based on when operator stimulation and performance testing would be most useful” (Op. cit.: 156 et seq.).

The key to this betrays a technocratic understanding of social engineering, as: “It is all a question of understanding the design specs of the human machine” (Op. cit.: 179). By advocates of napping techniques<sup>51</sup>, including the so-called ‘Power Nap’, sleep is seen and promoted as enhancing creativity and improving one’s problem-solving skills. It is supposed to reduce the rate of mistakes and increase productivity. Sleeping on the job contributes to the de-privatisation of sleep. The boundaries between public and private are blurred (Baxter/Kroll-Smith 2005), when a formerly private state is brought into the public domain and as a consequence ceases to be private. Yet, the nap at work is limited, usually to about thirty or forty minutes to prevent the sleeper from entering deep sleep, and there are even artefacts to ensure one’s waking up on time, from a pencil to a so-called “Power Napping Enabler” – Sleep thieves they are as well, in the service of alertness and productivity. At the same time, sleep and sleepers become increasingly visible in places where they have not been before. Whether this leads to a lift on the taboo of being watched while asleep is an open question. On the other hand, one may choose to be watched and perceived as being asleep in certain situations even when one is awake.<sup>52</sup> This strategy may still not be widely acceptable in the world of work, though. In it, sleep advice brings along a “growing number of possibilities for management: workers can be governed – and learn to govern themselves – even through the basic, mundane bodily phenomenon of sleep” (Brown, M., 2004: 175). In comparison, sleep advice addressed at the general reader and proclaiming the benefits

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<sup>51</sup> More generally speaking, we can distinguish different types of nap with Martin (2003: 337 et seqq.), depending on whether it is sought for prophylaxis, relief, or pleasure.

<sup>52</sup> The issue of feigned sleep alerts us to the fact that although in most cases biological and social forms of sleep are intertwined they are by no means the same thing. If someone successfully employs the stratagem of feigning sleep, s/he is socially asleep, yet not biologically so. There are multiple reasons for and purposes of feigning sleep: “Behind the contrived appearance or veneer of sleep, and the innocence it evokes, a variety of motives may lurk, some more unsavoury than others” (Williams, 2007: 318). Interestingly, rough sleepers act according to the opposite strategy by “trying to rest or sleep without giving the impression that you are sleeping” (Rensen, 2003: 101). They attempt to appear socially awake while being biologically asleep.

of sleep hygiene shows a more friendly face to the audience. Here, the stress is not so much on pharmacological solutions, the problems of which have become common knowledge: Sleeping pills have side-effects, can cause rebound insomnia and may lead to addiction, although the products on the market nowadays tend to do so less than earlier ones did. Sleeping pills are a controversial and highly political issue as side-effects have been neglected for a long time with cases of patients exposed to an unsafe medication (Abraham/Sheppard 1999). Certain sleep disorders, such as sleep apnea, may require mechanical (e.g. a sleep mask) or surgical solutions. Less intrusive are the sleep hygienic<sup>53</sup> measures anyone can take: Practising progressive muscle relaxation, cognitive techniques, stimulus control, sleep state restriction, hypnosis and other alternative therapies, over-the-counter medication, the general avoidance of caffeine and nicotine before bedtime and keeping a regular sleep schedule. In addition to these, there are old household recipes such as milk boiled with onion; there is the use of aetheric oils and herbs, and diverse sorts of pillows and mattresses to ensure a good night's sleep. New needs are manufactured in the process as well as old ones dug up, like the beneficial effect of listening to music before sleep. A somewhat outlandish kind of music, the so-called "Brain Music" has been developed in Moscow: One's electroencephalogram is transformed into sounds, which are supposed to help one in finding sleep (Martin, 2003: 267). Once one has found the right sleep, one may even use it to good purpose: As lack of sleep has been linked to obesity, sleep diets are advertised for weight loss. It remains to be seen whether these ways of doing sleep will become engrained in the sleeper's body and psyche as deeply as to be perceived as actual sleep needs: They are definitely contributing to changing what it means to be asleep for the subjects who are interpellated by and making use of them. Whatever the procedures marketed and chosen, under conditions of healthicisation-cum-sleepicisation, the individual is strongly responsible for his/her sleep and related behaviour and asked to exert a form of self-surveillance in sleep matters (Williams, 2005: 157). We have seen that sleep has come under siege, beleaguered by external interests, losing its private character, albeit not completely. To a certain extent, it still makes sense to see the bedroom as "an intimate, almost sacred place" (Hobson, 1995: 7). Maybe this is one of the reasons why it can be exploited by commercial interests driven by a veritable 'Sleep-Industrial Complex' (Mooallem 2007). Duvet days, the medicalisation of sleep and a sleep industry indicate how sleep has been

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<sup>53</sup> For some early evidence of sleep hygiene from the sixteenth century onwards, see: Wright, 2004: 186 et seqq.

commercialised, but they also represent “an attempt to both formulate and regulate our sleeping patterns not as an end or a good in itself, but ... in terms of the need to produce *disciplined* subjects who are in thrall to the instrumental or technocratic values of modern capitalist societies; when asleep as well as awake” (Hancock/Tyler, 2008: 43; It., AF).

Of course, there are countervailing trends as well, veritable celebrations of sleep, with the siesta being praised as art of living (Paquot 2005). The standard is high, given that the Foucauldian concept of the art of living encompasses an ethical aesthetics of existence which strives to turn one’s life into a piece of art and a philosophy of erotic pleasure as well as friendship transforming the self (Schmid 2000). The roots of this concept in Stoic philosophy and the insistence on philosophising as exercise have been stressed by Pierre Hadot (1995). He has advocated the rediscovery of philosophy as a way of life, a way characterised by exercises such as meditation, exploring one’s conscience and the contemplation of nature. Yet, Hadot avoided the aestheticisation of this philosophy, including what he saw as Foucault’s aesthetic reading of the ancient care of the self, since the aim of the exercises was the good, not the beautiful, and to transcend oneself towards wisdom. In the Christian adoption of some of these exercises as an expert spirituality and the denigration of philosophy as *ancilla theologiae* he saw a break with this tradition, although not a complete one. There is, however, a certain tension between the wakefulness that was part of the norm of the philosophical exercises and contemporary sketches of an art of sleep. There is also the question whether certain ways of life are closer to the art of sleep than others and whether hedonistic French intellectuals (s. Sage 2004) are more prone to embracing and celebrating it than presumably hard-working British ones. However, a protest- and strike-oriented political culture is just as much focussed on activity as is one shaped by an ethos of long working hours; only the types of activity cherished differ. On the other hand, some studies tell us that the French get a little more sleep per night than, for example, the Germans. Yet, anxieties about the consequences of globalisation and economic crises affect the French, the British, the Germans, and many others. This may be why critical reactions have become more and more international in scope. The Slow Movement, which aims at achieving more and better by slowing down (Honoré 2004), and advocacy for idleness, albeit with the paradoxical caveat “that you have to work at being idle” (Hodgkinson, 2005: 131) present possible points of contact with an emerging, constructive sleep culture – and thus, perhaps, points of resistance. Now, there is even an official Sleep Day – you better mark the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January in your diary for a day of indulgence in dormancy. If these attempts are capable of effectively hinting

beyond just another version of instrumentally rationalising sleep, remains to be seen. After all, Sleep Day is only one day in three hundred sixty-five.

A different type of movement based on inherited biological traits has started campaigning for better living and working conditions for ‘owls’. Founded in Denmark and spreading internationally, the ‘B-Society’ works on the assumption that present Western societies do not need to bind the whole of a population to a larkish schedule dating back to agricultural times. Instead, more flexibilisation of working hours is sought to support late risers in their daily lives. Activism in a number of countries has aimed at later school starts in the morning, taking into account that adolescents’ sleep patterns are more owlsh than those of adults. These attempts, however, have met with mixed reactions.

### *Interpellating the Problem Sleeper*

Before we shall explore how religious discourses have interpellated their sleeping and waking subjects, let us see more closely how this is done in contemporary sleep advice by examining a recent example of popular sleep literature, Zulley (2005). The author introduces himself as a sleep researcher, whose aim is to help people with sleep problems through generating understanding and knowledge of sleep. He asserts that self-help is the best form of help, as it makes us understand our bodies. The readers are encouraged to become their own sleep teachers. While this may be sufficient in many cases, more serious ones are referred to professionals. Results of contemporary sleep research are summarised and popularised by slogans that can be easily remembered; for example, that too little sleep makes us ‘ill, stupid, and fat’ (Op. cit.: 37). While this simplifying approach may pride itself on being more accessible to a larger reading audience than a strictly academic one would be, some stereotypical interpretations reveal a lot about the sociological imagination of the author. The interesting question what sleep positions of couples can tell us about the nature of their relationship is instructive. Pictures of sleeping couples have been printed in other publications geared towards the general reader, but the interpretation we find in Zulley (Op. cit.: 62) re-affirms the heteronormative assumptions built into such studies. Not only are the couples heterosexual ones only, also gender relations within such relationships are quite conventional: The ‘spoon position’ is taken to be an expression of love and closeness, but only if the man is behind; if he lies in front, we are told, he

may want to be left in peace. Readers are asked to get involved by means of a quiz and to test what sleep types they are, whether they are a morning or an evening person, a short or a long sleeper, whether their sleep tends to be light or deep. This text does without religious references, which are frequent in other publications on sleep advice, especially American ones.

### *Religious Rhetoric in Contemporary Sleep Therapies*

Towards the end of this chapter on diagnoses of an ‘unslept’ society and therapies for a well-rested one, I would like to consider the use made of religious rhetoric by –some of – the experts. US American pioneer of sleep medicine William Dement and his collaborator Christopher Vaughan (Dement/Vaughan 2001) recommend a three-week sleep camp to pay off one’s sleep debt and find a healthy sleep routine. While the concept of a ‘sleep debt’ seems to be drawn from economics, the complex of debt-guilt with its religious connotations comes to mind. Resonances of a bible camp are not coincidental, and the message the sleep advisers impart on their audience is formulated in no uncertain religious terms:

“One of my favorite letters arrived a few years ago from someone who wanted to tell me that the minister at her church taught from both the Bible and a book called *The Sleepwatchers*, a small book I wrote for the Stanford Alumni Association. The writer of the letter thought I would appreciate knowing that her minister at one time had my book in one hand and the Bible in the other as he preached from the pulpit. What we need in every neighborhood community is one person – a physician, a patient, a parent – who will preach the gospel of sleep. Our quality of life, and often life itself, hangs in the balance. But armed with some simple knowledge, all of us can fulfill sleep’s abundant promise and reclaim our birthright of healthy sleep” (Dement/Vaughan, 2001: 450).

The ‘promise’ of sleep is, in fact, the title of the book. The introduction of the minister mentioned in the letter serves to reinforce the author’s (Dement’s) authority, with the bible and his sleep tract being coequal in the minister’s hands. From this image we are easily led to the ‘gospel’ of sleep that needs to be preached as a matter, at times, of life and death. I do not wish to claim that Dement’s message is an intrinsically religious one. Rather, I feel that he and/or his co-author have made use of religious imagery as a rhetorical strategy to bolster the authority which they have assumed.

In a similar, yet also different way, Moore-Ede’s (1993: 213) last paragraph caters for religious sentiments as well:

“There is much richness to be gained by life in the global village, but we must make sure that it is fit for human habitation. In the twentieth century, we made ourselves technological giants. To succeed in the twenty-first century, we need to gain more wisdom about ourselves. In making our new century’s resolutions, we must heed the old truth with new meaning: You made my body, Lord; now give me sense to heed your laws. Psalms 119:71.”

In this case, however, there is a direct biblical quotation given. The wisdom of Psalms is invoked to achieve ‘success’. This is very much in line with the instrumentalising message we have encountered earlier, a message that also significantly shapes our approaches to sleep as a leisure pursuit within a competitive framework.

Sleep, jogging and slimming are cultivated not for “intrinsic enjoyment” but in order to enhance one’s chances at longevity, sex and work (Turner, 1996: 124). The Protestant Ethic has survived in part in the world of work, while the private sphere is marked by a “calculating hedonism” (Op. cit.: 195). Sleep may well be on its way of becoming a consumer good, possibly a manifestation of conspicuous consumption, if we want to choose a Veblenian interpretation. Sleep has become “part and parcel of the contemporary construction and cultivation of lifestyles, expressed in and through the body as the bearer of symbolic value” (Williams, S./Boden, 2004: 4). On the other hand and by recognising the performance-enhancing quality of sleep new napping-on-the-job models have contributed to “adding a further twist to the Protestant work ethic: namely, sleep as ally rather than enemy” (Op. cit.: 2).

That not all variants of Christian ethics have interpreted sleep as enemy, and some have even considered it an ally, will be demonstrated in the following chapters. However, whether sleep is an ally or an enemy, what both views usually have in common is the perceived need to discipline actually and potentially sleeping subjects and the structure of a speaking subject, representing the ultimate Subject, interpellating subjects. In Christian ideology this ultimate Subject is God, and the bible is his – or for those influenced by feminist theology: her – word. To this word and its wake-up calls, biblical wake-up calls, we shall devote our attention in the following chapter.



## **4 Asleep and Awake by the Book: Biblical Wake-Up Calls**

In this chapter we turn to the bible, the foundation document of Christianity: Both Old and New Testament call out to their faithful to leave slumber behind, in a metaphorical as well as in a literal sense, and so have the elite discourses of the exegetes. They are no less part of that tradition. Therefore a sociological approach has to attend to them for its own good: “a marriage of social-scientific critical studies of the Bible with literary and rhetorical criticism actually makes for, not only better biblical scholarship, but better sociology” (Coleman, J., 1999). This approach concerns itself with the sociology of literature, to which we shall return in chapter 9, and it is furthermore sensitive to issues of embodiment which stay with us throughout this study. Taking seriously the construction of the ‘Old Testament’ as such by Christianity, and since this is a critical study of Christian sleep disciplines, I will first concentrate on an example from the New and then move on to one from the Old Testament. The Gethsemane scene and the sleep ethics of wisdom literature are the respective examples for ways in which scripture has interpellated its believing and/or belonging subjects as wakeful ones. Discipline, in order to operate, needs disciples. Sleep discipline asks for disciples whose dormant bodies are controlled by and subjected to it and which are not dormant at all most of the time. It is in violation of these disciplinary rules that we find Jesus’ disciples in the garden of Gethsemane: asleep. They form the negative backdrop against which a culture of vigil/ance has been established with on-going effects up until the present day. It is therefore instructive to return to the biblical scene and revisit it. Exegetical commentaries are themselves part of the Christian tradition that is examined and will thus be taken into account as well. A historical example of this tradition – albeit on the more popularising, less on the academic side of the spectrum – can be found in the non-conformist Matthew Henry’s (1662-1714) reflections. Building on the biblical scene, his commentary reissues its wake-up call, exhorting to vigil/ance. In a more systematic vein, the structure of Christian vigil/ance within the religious ideology of God-Christ/Jesus-believer triangle is analysed, paying particular attention to waking/watching and (potential) punishment. Turning to the ‘Old Testament’, we will explore what it makes of sleep and how it has become an ethical

issue in its wisdom literature. This makes us inquire into the relations between sleep discipline, (work) ethics, and capitalism or other modes of production.

### *Gethsemane*

In Mark 13 we find a parable on wakefulness. It is based on *Naherwartung*. “Die von der Gemeinde geforderte Wachsamkeit geschieht in der Ausübung der Vollmacht, die der Herr den Jüngern zu ihrem jeweiligen Werk gegeben hat. ‘Schlafen’ hiesse demgemäss, das je aufgetragene Werk versäumen, nicht bloss mit der Wiederkunft des Hausherrn nicht rechnen” (Pesch, 1977: 317). The term, rarely used elsewhere, *agrypneite* literally means “Do not sleep!” – and we can find it in Wisdom Literature, as Gnlika (1979: 209) has reminded us, who also reads Gethsemane as an illustration of this parable. The Gethsemane scene is to be found in the New Testament, more specifically in the canonical gospels. There it is not the only story that has Jesus deal with sleep-related matters. The synoptics, that is: the gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke, present us with three key scenes of Jesus’s life in which sleep figures. For one, there is the narrative about Jesus sleeping on a boat and subsequently being woken up by his disciples. They are afraid of the raging storm, which has come up. Jesus’ stilling of the storm makes for a happy ending to this episode. Then there is the daughter of Jairus: She is said to have died, and Jesus raises her – not without having proclaimed her to be just asleep. Although these two stories in themselves and as representing the synoptic sleep scenes would be of interest, in what follows I will confine myself to dealing with the third sleep scene, situated in the garden of Gethsemane. This conscious self-limitation is warranted by the overarching topic of this book, sleep discipline.

In a certain, specific sense the Gethsemane scene can be regarded as the one that has provided a good deal of Christian tradition with a distanced view on sleep as something that is to be avoided, especially at the wrong times. What the wrong times for sleep are, and if they are much more prevalent than supposedly right times for it, has of course been viewed differently. It is the monastic traditions which have championed the view – and according practices – that less is more in terms of sleep, a subject to which we shall return later on. It looks as if the Puritan ‘secularised monk’, who had shut the door of the monastery, more or less safely, behind him has left a

legacy to us, more or less: secular non-Puritans, even and maybe particularly in those strands of contemporary consumer culture where both fitness *and* hedonism have been turned into an individual's duty.

The scene of the sleeping disciples is an impressive one: At the same time it is most shocking and has, in no mean way, contributed to giving sleep a bad name. By referring to this passage of the gospel text and its imagery, reckless sleepers could always be reminded of the scandal of Gethsemane to be "convinced" of the sinfulness of their ways. In order to understand the impressive as well as shocking effects such a reminder could have (had) and in order to grasp the extent of the scandal – both ways of understanding and grasping are here meant to give us a clue for getting the picture of Christian sleep discipline and its successor(s) – let us first take a look at how the scene was developed in Mark, Matthew and Luke. It leads right into the passion narratives, the accounts of Jesus's suffering and death by crucifixion: After the last supper, Jesus and his disciples go to the garden of Gethsemane. There he instructs them to sit down (as Matthew and Mark have it) or simply to pray (due to Luke). According to Mark and Matthew, Jesus takes Peter, James and John to his side, shares his anguish with them and asks them to stay awake and pray. This part is missing in Luke, yet he joins the other two synoptics in narrating Jesus' pleading with God. He addresses God as his father and asks that the cup may be taken from him. Upon returning to the others, he finds they have fallen asleep. Only Luke<sup>54</sup> gives a reason for their sleep that is more elaborate than the quasi-tautological 'heavy eyes'<sup>55</sup> of the other two story-tellers: According to him, the disciples are sleeping out of sorrow, and Jesus says to them: "Why are you sleeping? ... Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation" (Luke 22: 46; NIV). With Mark and Matthew, Jesus finds the disciples asleep thrice and at the first time exclaims the still proverbial sentence about the spirit being willing and the flesh's being weak. At the second time, he finds them with their eyes full of sleep, and Mark adds that they do not know how to reply. The sequence is

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<sup>54</sup> This has been noticed by G.H.P. Thompson (1972), although this cause of sleep appears somewhat embellished as "nervous exhaustion arising from sorrow and anxiety at the crisis facing Jesus" (Op. cit.: 263). Thompson also ventures the hypothesis that Luke did not (only) rely on Mark for his account of the Gethsemane scene but may have had another source. This could account for the differences in Mk and Lk that have often been attributed to Lk's attempt at de-contrasting Jesus and his disciples and de-escalating the whole situation.

<sup>55</sup> Rudolf Pesch (1977: 393) reads the 'heavy eyes' as symbols of 'weak flesh'. The disciples are types of the Christian who is endangered by temptation and weakness of flesh (Op. cit.: 396). Waking and praying are needed to overcome the temptation to turn away from Jesus. In Gnllka's (1979: 262 et seq.) interpretation, which stresses the importance of prayer, the 'heavy eyes' stand for the disciples' spiritual blindness.

completed by Jesus finding them asleep for the third time and asking: “Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand” (Mark 14: 41bf.; KJV). The New International Version conveys Jesus’ anger in a more expressive vein: “Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come”. As these different versions have created different texts, more different texts about these texts have been created by theological imagination. Biblical theology, or more specifically the craft of exegesis, has formed an outlet for this type of interpretive imagination, in which reading into the text/s (*eisegesis*) has been as much part of the game as reading out of it.

Martin Dibelius’ (1953) form-critical approach holds that the temptation originally meant was eschatological in nature. The sentence that the spirit is willing does not match the disciples’ situation but was targeted at early Christian communities who were waiting for the return of their lord. The shifting to the Gethsemane context necessitated a shift in meaning, which is why the disciples had to appear as sleepers, natural human sleepers. In Luke there is no disappointment about the disciples’ behaviour: It is euphemised, as in this account they sleep out of sorrow, not due to weakness. The scene as a whole, Dibelius concludes, expresses the redemptive suffering of the Messiah and in doing so emphasises the difference between Jesus and the sleeping disciples (Op. cit.: 271). In his study of the synoptic Gethsemane, Holleran (1973) recounts the exegetical tradition’s belief in the historical authenticity of the scene: After all, the disciples are not presented very favourably, so it has been deemed unlikely that this episode sprung solely from the biblical authors’ imagination. This is also supported by Feldmeier (1987: 137), who easily imagines the disciples’ dozing off after the pascha meal with its consumption of at least four cups of wine. This consideration definitely has the merit of being imaginative itself. The significance of the disciples’ sleep is recognised by Holleran (1973: 32), who interprets it as a sign of failure and imminent betrayal: “Their sleep, then, is more than casual drowsiness. It is a sign to Jesus and a warning to the community.” Still more than that, he states: “It is proof of their utter unreadiness to share in the Paschal deliverance which is at hand” (Op. cit.: 34). A connection between the text in question and others is established: Mark 13: 33-37, the parable exhorting to wakefulness because the hour of the houseowner’s return is unknown. For Holleran, the sleeping disciples are “acting out” (Ibd.) this very parable. This appears to be a valid reflection since, even though the

parable is not immediately preceding the Gethsemane account, it is to be found in the chapter before that one. We shall treat this parable in more detail below, as it forms the ideological counterpart to the ‘events’ or non-events (from the perspective of the sleeping, therefore unable to perceive any events, disciples) of Gethsemane. Now, the idea of the sleeping disciples acting out something strikes one as counter-intuitive. This impression notwithstanding, the disciples’ behaviour is invested with the responsibility that comes with an action, drawn from the action they were expected to perform in the first place: waking. Consequently, this scene has been understood not as centring around a state of consciousness – being awake or being asleep as such is not the question – but as being about conscious action (for others s. Feldmeier 1987). From this point of view, the lack of the right sort of action leads to the dire consequences of the passion story. A similar focus on responsibility is shaping Holleran’s view, due to which the disciples are unfit for the imminent Pascha meal, in his theological interpretation that is the Pascha of Christ. This judgment is based on another text, this time from Rabbinic sources. Rabbi Jose ben Halaphta probably passed on an older Pascha rule, which could date back to the times of the New Testament. According to this rule, the paschal meal can be resumed, while some of its participants are dozing. It is forbidden, though, to continue with the meal when they have fallen into a deep sleep.<sup>56</sup> Fifth-century Rabbi Aschi gave a criterion for how to determine whether someone is dozing: The dozing person would reply if being spoken to, but would be unable to fully respond (Holleran, 1973: 48 et seq.). In a recent survey of what the Hebrew tradition has to say about sleep, psychiatrist Sonia Ancoli-Israel (2001) has identified this as stage 1 sleep of a sleep cycle. Holleran goes on to assume that this pascha ritual may have already existed when the gospels were written in the second half of the first century CE. Following along these lines, the scene may come to stand for an abrupt ending of the Pascha and Jesus’ resulting loneliness. Raymond E. Brown (1994), who pioneered the use of the historical-critical method in Roman Catholic exegesis in the United States, has called this interpretation in question, because we only have later external evidence for this practice of the pascha meal and

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<sup>56</sup> This tradition is also mentioned in E. Earle Ellis, 1966: 257, although only in passing, since his interest is in a more spiritualising interpretation. Having stated the rule about the breach of the passover union by sleepers, he thus goes on: “More importantly, Jesus sees in the attitude a lethargy toward the peril of temptation. One who now sleeps soon will deny his lord” (Op. cit.). This last remark obviously refers to Peter’s denial of Jesus.

not any internal textual one. The repetition of the scene<sup>57</sup> and triple prayer intensify the situation, which is closed by the “stirring cry” to get up – “Egeiresthe!” – in order to face the threat ahead. Holleran detects a parallel to John in Luke’s gospel, since both have worked on the topic of sorrow (Joh 16: 20-22), and Luke’s disciples have fallen asleep because of sorrow. The synoptics have chosen to tell the story in different ways, with different nuances, but the sleeping of the disciples is told in all of the three versions:

“Far from being merely a novelistic contrast or an ad hoc setting for the saying of Jesus on vigilance and prayer, this detail is present in every strain of the synoptic accounts (...) and has been subject to the same variety of interpretations as the distress and prayer of Jesus. The disciples’ sleep is the basic fact; it is the context of meaning which shifts” (Holleran, 1973: 222).

Feldmeier identifies a meaning of the verb commonly used for sleep in the New Testament (*katheudein*) as being far from an expectant waiting for God’s coming (Mark 13: 1, Thess 5: 2 et seqq. with a parallel of sleep and drunkenness on one side, with waking consciousness and sobriety on the other). More recently, Raymond Brown (1994) has pointed up the difference between Mark/Matthew and Luke: While for the former two synoptics ‘sleep’ means ‘not watching’, in Luke it is ‘not praying’. Brown (Op. cit.: 205) also brings together two different levels of meaning and their spiritual significance for the disciples’ situation, as “‘sleep’ is something with symbolic as well as physical import; it makes the disciples unprepared for the ever closer *peirasmós*”, that is for their trial or temptation.

Wake-up calls can be found in Romans 13: 11 (“...you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers”; NRSV) but also in hermetic and other gnostic literature. Sleeping could refer to living without God (Eph 5: 14): The sleeper would be far from God, whereas those awake would follow Jesus consciously and live out of God’s day/tomorrow. So much for the sleeper’s situation in Pauline and deutero-Pauline letters, but what about Jesus’s situation in the garden of Gethsemane? Being without relationships, closed off from the world and thus dead-like is he when he returns to see the sleeping disciples, at least if we are willing to believe this dramatic interpretation:

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<sup>57</sup> In his book that has been influential in shaping the socio-rhetorical perspective in biblical criticism, Vernon K. Robbins discerns “three repetitive units of action” with a climactic emphasis in the third unit (Robbins, 1984: 22).

"(...) In this unbelievable unresponsiveness, in this already subterranean sleepiness *the whole world's being closed off is parabolically condensed*. For Jesus this sleep, the triple and repeated one in spite of his complaint, his request and his exhortations, is an *expression of the loss of all relationships* and thus a *parable for death* increasingly taking hold of the son of man" (Feldmeier, 1987: 247, Transl. AF).

Like Feldmeier, Morna Hooker (1993) sees no reason to deny the basic historicity of the Gethsemane scene. She points out that the command to keep watch picks up on the final parable told in the gospel of Mark, the parable of the travelling master of a house. Since earlier in this chapter I have called this parabolic speech the ideological counterpart of the Gethsemane 'events', this is the place to get back to this statement. In Mark 13 Jesus speaks of the coming of the Son of man, gathering his chosen ones, as of a not too distant future, yet one that is not to be precisely prognosticated. At the heart of Christian disciplines of forgoing bodily and mental sleep lies a quotation referring to the timing of the Son of man's coming and thus setting the stage for practices of timing that centre on the believers' knowledge, or faith, that *the time* is and has to be unknown:

"But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Take heed, watch; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Watch therefore – for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning – lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Watch" (Mark 13:32-37; RSV).

The ascetics' wisdom knew – in a sociological sense of knowing – that a spiritualising interpretation of this passage would not be good enough, that the spirit of vigil/ance and the actual practice of bodily sleep-deprivation were part and parcel of the same burden and promise. Could their knowledge be considered a non-dualist urge for discipline? As much as the wider orbit of this question is not to be lost sight of throughout this study, the next chapter will approach it in more detail. In spite of the fact that the links between the parable of the master's return and Gethsemane are rightly stated by Hooker, her emphasis on the dramatic momentum leads her to play out literal versus metaphorical levels of meaning when giving her interpretation of Jesus's appeal to his closest disciples:

"The injunction here means more than simply 'keep awake': the time of testing has already begun, and if the disciples are not to succumb they must be ready to meet it" (Hooker, 1993: 348).

Further emphasis is given to the scene by its double repetition according to Hooker. Ivor Jones, in his commentary on Matthew, also finds the triple pattern remarkable. Yet, he is more concerned with the ways in which the protagonist and his companions at Gethsemane are portrayed differently: "The disciples sleep; the son of Man prays. The contrast points up the distinction between Jesus and his disciples" (Jones, 1994: 162). Rawlinson (1949: 211) had already discovered this as well and connected it to a possible intention of Mark to prepare the early Christian community for martyrdom. He put forward as a potential implication the hypothetical idea that vigilant disciples in Gethsemane would not have fled from Jesus's side later on, as they did. Rawlinson supposes that Jesus heard or saw Judas approaching with the authorities and called upon his companions to go and meet them. This interpretation is not presented without a moralistic overtone that reveals quite a bit about the exegete's own view of sleep: "The disciples must not be found stretched supinely upon the ground" (Op. cit.: 213). Allan Menzies (1901: 260) mused that the third time Jesus leaves the others is not explicitly mentioned in Mark "as if the reporter had been too sleepy to notice it". He does not think that the invitation to sleep on is irony, but that now there is no more reason for watching, as Jesus has accepted his fate. By contrast, H. B. Swete (1905: 346) took Jesus's permission as an expression of irony. He likens the scene to the earlier transfiguration where the same three had been present and equally experienced drowsiness and speechlessness. The Watch-and-pray command is explained by the necessity of a wakeful spirit for prayer. The eschatological significance of being awake is manifest in Luke 21: 36, in which prior to the passion story Jesus asks his listeners to wake and pray at all times, so that they could avoid what would be happening and stand before the son of man. This message is echoed in the deuterio-Pauline letter to Ephesians with its command "Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints" (Eph 6: 18, NRSV). In the context of the canonical gospels, the spirit of wakefulness inspired Matthew's (15: 1-13) parable of the ten virgins, five of whom are called wise, the other five foolish ones. Wakefulness in this story clearly does not relate to absence of sleep, for both the wise and the foolish virgins fall asleep while waiting for the bridegroom. However, unlike the foolish ones, the wise virgins had the foresight of bringing some oil along with their lamps. This proved to be a momentous mistake



for the foolish virgins, since only the wise ones with their lighted lamps, the ‘ready’ ones, were admitted to the wedding hall. The parable is about the realm of heavens, and wakefulness is depicted as the key quality of being ready whenever the time may come that one does not know about beforehand. In this parable it is clearly metaphorically employed: Wakefulness is spiritualised, but this does not mean that the reception would not re-literalise it at times.

In sum, it is to be noted that both spiritual or metaphorical and literal or physical interpretations of the disciples’ sleep or rather its meaning have been given to make sense of this biblical passage. Similarly alternative interpretations drawing on different meanings of sleep for religious anthropology will be encountered in the next chapter of this study. Meanwhile, however, we shall turn to a historical reader and commentator of the Gethsemane scene who combined the literal and the metaphorical levels of the meaning of ‘sleep’. From commentary literature that has been influenced by historical-critical exegesis, let us turn to an interpretive example which is itself historical, the early eighteenth-century dissident Matthew Henry and his influential early eighteenth-century *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, also known as *An Exposition of the Old and New Testaments* (Henry 2006). This work was written and chiefly used for the believers’ edification, for which purpose it has been held in high esteem. The sort of edification Henry delivers about Gethsemane reminds one of the ending to Kierkegaard’s *Either/Or*, the minister’s sermon on the edifying thought of our always being in the wrong before God. In this religious framework, Jesus is presented as Christ. He does not demand much, not too much from his disciples, nothing beyond their strengths, according to Henry. ‘Christ’s’ saying about willing spirit and weak flesh appears as a “very kind and tender excuse” (Henry 2006). His repeated return exemplifies the “continued care” he shows for the church, “even when it is half asleep”. With this, we have arrived at the contrasting depiction of the disciples. They were “so little affected” by what affected their teacher, and whereas he stands out as a model of care, they are the very opposite: “This carelessness of theirs was a presage of their further offence in deserting him”, and particularly Simon Peter does not meet the expectations – although he could have done so. Of course, in this perspective the presumption of agency is the logical precondition for what followed historically. Henry’s moral evaluation of the scene is straightforward: “It was bad to sleep when Christ was in his agony.” He goes on to universalise the moral of the story into a practical maxim: continuous prayer. When, for biblical confirmation, he renders Lk 18:

1 as “men ought to pray, and not to faint” the relevance for the passage at hand is obvious: Not to faint means not to fall asleep. An alternative translation of Luke’s verse has, instead of “not to faint”: “not lose heart” (RSV), a command clearly devoid of any connection with the subject of sleep or loss of consciousness. The weakness-of-the-flesh aphorism is transformed into an outspoken devaluation of the body in Henry’s reading of the text. His readers are to set their hopes on a state in which they will have been liberated from their bodily existence on earth. In his commentary on Matthew, an even more dramatic reading of the scene is given:

“...they were so dull, that they could not keep their eyes open. What had become of us, if Christ had been now as sleepy as his disciples were? It is well for us that our salvation is in the hand of one who *neither slumbers nor sleeps*. Christ engaged them to watch with him, as if he expected some succour from them, and yet they slept; surely it was the unkindest thing that could be. When David wept at this mount of Olives, all his followers wept with him (2 Sam 15: 30); but when the Son of David was here in tears, his followers were asleep. His enemies, who watched for him, were wakeful enough (Mark 14: 43); but his disciples, who should have watched with him, were asleep. Lord, what is man! What are the best of men, when God leaves them to themselves! Note, Carelessness and carnal security, especially when Christ is in his agony, are great faults in any, but especially in those who profess to be nearest in relation to him. The church of Christ, which is his body, is often in an agony, fighting without and fears within; and shall we be asleep then, like Gallio, that *cared for none of these things*; or those (Amos 6: 6) that *lay at ease, and were not grieved for the affliction of Joseph?*” (Henry 2006).

Drowsiness and the temptations of disbelief and desertion are closely linked for Henry, as are the supposed remedies of watching and praying. Prayer is stressed as facilitating some more praying and watching, when the believer is given this practical advice: “When we are drowsy in the worship of God, we should pray, as a good Christian once did, ‘The Lord deliver me from this sleepy devil!’” There is no clear distinction being made between what Henry calls “spiritual slumber” and bodily sleep(iness). However, his interpretation is not merely concerned with the spiritual as an indisposition of the mind to fulfil one’s religious duties – otherwise, the recurring themes of body/soul and bodily limitations would not make much sense. Also, the issue of “security”, mostly referred to as “carnal security” by Henry, seems to be a matter of the material, physical body. In sum, sleep(iness) as a state of mind and as a state of body are blended together. The prospects Henry offers to such sleepers are not at all uplifting ones:

“*Sleep on now, and take your rest*. This is spoken ironically; ‘Now sleep if you can, sleep if you dare; I would not disturb you if Judas and his band of men would not.’ See here how Christ deals with those that suffer themselves to be overcome by security, and will not be awakened out of it. *First*, sometimes he gives them up to the power of it; *Sleep on now*. He that will sleep, let him sleep still. The curse of spiritual slumber is the just punishment of the sin of it. Rom

11: 8; Hos 4: 17. *Secondly*, Many times he sends some startling judgment, to awaken those that would not be wrought upon by the word; and those who will not be alarmed by reasons and arguments had better be alarmed by swords and spears than left to perish in their security. Let those that would not believe, be made to feel" (Henry 2006).

Punishment and judgment loom large in the alarmism of this Gethsemane interpretation. These threats are far from unique to Henry's devotional commentary, though. Rather they have served for a long time as motivational factors in the spirit of vigil/ance. This spirit lives on, to refer to a nowadays possibly more widely known text, in the libretto of Johann Sebastian Bach's *St Matthew Passion* written by Christian Friedrich Henrici's, also known as Picander. The model of the exemplary disciple is expressed; he declares that he wants to keep awake by 'his' Jesus' side, to which the chorus responds that thus our sins fall asleep. The soteriological implications of this exchange are based upon the idea of satisfaction: Jesus Christ redeems humankind by satisfying the claims his Father has against his human creatures. The sleep-death analogy is used here as well, when upon Jesus's death the graves of the saints, who had been 'sleeping', open up, their bodies rise, and they leave their graves after resurrection and appear to many in the holy city. There is also the wish to bury Jesus to find rest in him. Jesus's death figures as cushion for the anxious conscience and repose of the soul, granting joy to the slumber of the eyes. This slumber clearly points to the final sleep, which is death. Before death, however, there is a vigilant life to be led, and it is to the consideration of vigilance to which our [vigilant] attention moves on now.

### *Vigil/ance*

The injunction to wake and pray as pronounced by the Jesus of the Gethsemane scene and reinforced by Matthew Henry and Picander has been translated into liturgical practice. This form of practice is known as vigil. The Easter vigil figures as the most prominent example at the heart of the liturgical year, but it is by no means the only one. It has been argued that vigils were practised even before fasting, and that only in the fourth century CE fasting came to be combined with the customary vigils on the eves of Easter and Christmas. Nevertheless, forgoing sleep for ritual purposes has been much less researched than forgoing food (Wiedemann/Dowden, 2003: XVII). Twelfth-century Cistercian and scholastic theologian Alain de Lille justified the practice of

waking: “Night vigils ... were not instituted without reason, for by them it is signified that we must rise in the middle of the night to sing the night office, so that the night may not pass without divine praise” (Ekirch, 2006: 302). The spirit of vigil/ance, however, has spread far beyond its erstwhile religious locations – so much so that these tend to be forgotten. When Nick Fox (1995; 1999), for example, contrasts the gift with the vigil of care, which is exemplified in Florence Nightingale’s nursing programme, he draws attention to the Christian pre-formation of the gift. About the Christian tradition of vigil/ance he remains silent, though.

‘Waking’, or ‘agrypnein’, is used in different contexts in the Septuagint: Waking at someone’s grave is mentioned in Ijob 21: 32 and waking daily by the gates of Wisdom in Proverbs 8: 34. Waking for the sake of Wisdom liberates from care (Wisdom 6: 15). More interesting in terms of reception is its occurrence in the Song of Songs (5: 2; NRSV): “I slept, but my heart was awake. Listen! My beloved is knocking. ‘Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one; for my head is wet with dew, my locks with the drops of the night’”. The juxtaposition of a sleeping body and a waking heart or soul will be encountered in other contexts, too. And another use of ‘agrypnein’ concerns us. In the New Testament, in Hebrews 13: 17 it is used as ‘watching over’: “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls and will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with sighing—for that would be harmful to you”. Sleepless nights are also an expression of an apostle’s serving God and accepting many forms of deprivation in Pauline religious imagination (2 Cor 6: 5; 11: 27).

What does the structure of this vigilant spirit look like? The first and foremost subject is God, the one who neither sleeps nor slumbers. As such he is the personification of all-vigilance. This person/ification has got eyes that never close. The believer is permanently observed and watched by this God, who will punish any wrongdoings thus perceived. Watching and punishing are indeed closely related in this ideological structure. Whereas the inmate of the Benthamite panopticon never knows whether he is being watched, and therefore has to reckon that s/he is under permanent surveillance, the idea of a panoptical God is less economical: This God indeed watches his subjects all the time. The structure of vigilance is based on this ever-watching Subject God, the only subject that is merely agent and not subject to anyone or anything. Even the figure of Christ does not change this picture, for the Kenosis (Self-emptying) is a reflexive act of redemption. The human subjects, called into subjecthood by God,

are subject to the rule of being awake (once again literal, physical and metaphorical, spiritual meanings overlap). They are called to imitate the Jesus of Gethsemane, not the failing disciples. Assuming that the believer follows the commandment and stays awake: What or whom does s/he watch? The God, whose rule s/he obeys, can never be an object of the believer's gaze. The Jesus of Gethsemane left his disciples for prayer and found them asleep upon his return. So, even if they would have remained watching and praying they would not have been able to see and watch him. Now, there are only two potential objects left to watch: The other believers and oneself. The complementary exercise of social control and self-control is at the root of this model. It has made use of elements found in Jewish tradition and in what Christians have called the Old Testament.

*Those who love sleep will grow poor! Sleep and its Ethics in the Old Testament and its Wisdom*

The specific role assigned to the writings of the Hebrew Bible by and for Christian tradition as the so-called Old Testament allowed for their serving as a reservoir and repertory of disciplinary motives, including the sleep disciplinary ones I am interested in. Resonances of the sleep-idleness-poverty theme pervade other, later stages of Christian sleep discipline. Before listening to this theme, however, it is advisable to set the stage sociologically. For this task, I briefly draw on Max Weber's account of the Christian adoption or creation of the Old Testament. The sleep disciplinary motives have to be thus contextualised, and it is such contextualising that will facilitate the discovery of continuities as well as discontinuities. In order to grasp the textual context of the wisdom literature and particularly the book of Proverbs, a brief overview of sleep in the Old Testament is given. Of course, this cannot aim to be exhaustive, but it serves to indicate that the sleep disciplinary tradition is not the only one in the bible. Still, it is the (only) one I am concerned with for the purpose of my inquiry. Following a brief overview, Wisdom and Proverbs come into play. They construct the association of sleep and idleness leading to poverty, the obverse of which is praise for work. Or, as the perspective of Wisdom has been summed up: "Diligent work leads to success" ("*fleißiges Arbeiten führt zum Erfolg*"; Dautzenberg, 1978: 347). This association was to be re-invented time and time again. Yet, with every re-invention something new is

created: The avoidance of poverty, for example, was not always a manifest intention, but condemnation of sleep/idleness and praise for work led to the unintended consequence of wealth in monastic contexts. Re-invention may also entail rediscovery: Today's prosperity preachers frequently quote Proverbs, encourage and embody the avoidance of poverty, and proclaim a gospel of "health and wealth". This is, in parts, far more extreme than the classical ethic of ascetic Protestantism that still warned against idolising the Mammon, yet also against idolising and indulging in sleep. Were these Protestants then only heirs of Proverbs? Max Weber (1952) claimed that a Christian church and its ethics of everyday life could have never developed without the "adoption" of the Old Testament as a holy book. In the light of Weber's own reasoning, we might ask whether this process should not better be described and rendered as one of take-over. The German *Übernahme* Weber speaks of can mean both adoption and take-over. There is a certain inconsistency between Weber's point about the adoption of the Old Testament and his earlier one about its creation. Did the Christians really adopt an old testament, or did they not rather create it as such themselves? What was adopted, or rather taken over, was the Hebrew bible, and this process of adoption then only brought a so-called "Old Testament" into being. More recently, Christian exegesis has shown some sensitivity in this respect: Speaking of a first (i.e. the formerly so-called Old) and a second (i.e. the formerly so-called New) Testament in order to give up the anti-judaic implications of conventional terminology is a timely theological suggestion. As much as the honest attempt to deal with the underlying problem of anti-judaism is to be welcomed, one may ask whether the new vocabulary really faces up to this very problem, i.e. the historical legacy of anti-judaism and the question of just how much it has been inherent in the Christian tradition. Could it be that new speech regulations, once they would have become widespread, might cover this tricky issue up rather than confront it? When using the term 'Old Testament' rather than 'First Testament' in this chapter, I do so to emphasise the constructed character of the biblical texts; i.e. the creation of the Old Testament *as such*, and as distinct from the Hebrew Bible, by Christians. Ironically, the allegedly superior suggestion of 'first' and 'second' testaments misses this point by insinuating a continuous, potentially non-conflictual, chronological development.

Before we turn to the wisdom literature of the Old Testament, the pedagogical impetus of which includes elements of an ethics of sleep, let us briefly survey other occurrences of sleep in the first part of the Christian bible. The first sleeping subject can be found

already in the book of Genesis: Adam, “the man” as more recent translations have it, is sent into a state of “deep sleep” (Genesis 2:21) by God, who then goes on to create woman out of one of the man’s ribs. A similarly deep sleep is said to have fallen on Abram, before God makes his covenant with him (Genesis 15). Sleep as a pre-condition for dreaming occurs in Genesis 28, where it leads to Jacob’s dream of the heavenly ladder and God’s promise to be with and watch over him. The same Jacob mentions one of the basic, material requisites for sleep, when he reproaches Laban: “And what was my life like? The heat burned me in the daytime. And it was so cold at night that I froze. I couldn’t sleep. That’s what it was like for the 20 years I was living with you” (Genesis 31:40 et seq., NIV). The message of the seven fat and seven lean years is Joseph’s interpretation of the two dreams the Pharaoh had during his sleep (Genesis 41). In the other books of the Torah, there is a concern with the sleep of the poor:

“If you take your neighbour’s cloak in pawn, you shall restore it before the sun goes down; for it may be your neighbour’s only clothing to use as cover; in what else shall that person sleep? And if your neighbour cries out to me, I will listen, for I am compassionate” (Exodus 22: 26 et seq.).<sup>58</sup>

This admonition is also expressed in Deuteronomy:

“When you make your neighbour a loan of any kind, you shall not go into the house to take the pledge. You shall wait outside, while the person to whom you are making the loan brings the pledge out to you. If the person is poor, you shall not sleep in the garment given you as the pledge. You shall give the pledge back by sunset, so that your neighbour may sleep in the cloak and bless you; and it will be to your credit before the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 24: 10-13).

It is these norms that the prophet Amos (Am 2: 8) seems to have in mind, when denouncing those who do not act accordingly, but keep the coat given as a pledge and recline on it<sup>59</sup>; he also condemns the idleness of “those who lie upon beds of ivory” (6: 4). These text passages are of some interest, not only because they tell us something about the way in which biblical ethics is sensitive to poverty. They also imply information on sleeping arrangements in Israel: the practice of using one’s coat as a cover. In the part on techniques of sleep in his *Techniques du corps*, Marcel Mauss

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<sup>58</sup> The following quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>59</sup> Joseph Blenkinsopp (1983: 105) argues for Amos’s clearly referring to these rules of the law, although Amos does not explicitly do so (Blenkinsopp, 1983: 105).

(1934) mentions – amongst several other differences that can be discovered in how people/s sleep – his observation that some sleep covered and others uncovered. Differences regarding covered and uncovered sleep can also be found in monastic traditions, as we shall see later on. We may add that regional climate and temperatures at night play a role in these sleeping arrangements as well. Another feature of sleep is the vulnerability of the sleeper: Heber is murdered by his wife with a tent peg and a hammer, while he is asleep (Judges 4: 21). Sleeping Samson’s head is being shaved, and thus he is deprived of his strength (Judges 16). Insomnia was known to the ancient Israelites and they dealt with it rather much as we still do: The king who is unable to find sleep in Esther 6: 1 orders his servants to read to him. Elijah, in a contest with the Baal’s priests about whose God is the right one, seeing that the other side is about to lose, mocks the priests and their non-responding God by suggesting that he is perhaps asleep and needs to be woken up (1 Kings 18: 7). The contrast between Baal and the God of Israel is clear: “1 King’s Baal seems oblivious to the noise of his priests and sleeps undisturbed”, whereas the biblical rainstorm is “brought by Israel’s God who does not sleep” (Jacobson 1998). The book of Psalms abounds with references to sleep: The parallel of sleep and death is often invoked, as “sleeping in death” (Psalms 13: 3) or as “sleep of death” (Psalms 90:5). In Psalm 44 God is addressed as sleeping, which has been interpreted as reflecting the feeling of God’s absence on part of the psalmist. A similar, though clearly metaphorically intended, chord is struck in Psalm 78: 65, where it says by way of comparison: “Then the Lord awoke as from sleep, as a man wakes from the stupor of wine”. The idea that being asleep and being drunk are related recurs in the New Testament, yet within a remarkably different moralising context. Paul writes to the Thessalonians: “Let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation” (1 Thess 5: 6-8; KJV). Paul seems to have night-time activities in mind which he does not deem reconcilable with a Christian life-style, including sexual and cultic ones (Malysz, 2003: 71; 78). The translation of the New International Version has a call for alertness and self-control instead of the older version’s watchfulness and sobriety<sup>60</sup>. Back to the Psalms: Psalm

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<sup>60</sup> The pairing of wakefulness and sobriety is also found in John Chrysostomos’ (1992: III: 30; 382) baptismal catecheses from the late fourth century CE. In his Easter night address, he reminds those who have been just baptised and thus accepted into the Christian community, that they are especially vulnerable to the doings of the evil one and in need of security and protection. To provide them with



121: 4 says that Israel's God "does not doze and does not sleep". Psalm 127: 2 claims of the same God "he gives his loved ones sleep", although this translation has been very much debated. Luther, an enemy of the sin of idleness which he felt was destroying the unity of the body of Christ and saw at work in Catholic worship of the saints and in monastic life, had "To his beloved one He gives it in sleep" (or rather the German equivalent); "it" has been understood as representing a reward or gift from God, without whose backing all human labour is in vain. Psalm 132: 3-5 gives a case of voluntary sleep-deprivation for God's sake: "I will not enter my house or go to my bed—I will allow no sleep to my eyes, no slumber to my eyelids, till I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob" (NIV). In Song of Solomon, there is an ambiguous recollection: "I slept, but my heart was awake" (5: 2), which might refer to dreaming, but could just as well be about the generally attentive being of the speaker, who thinks of his lover. Jeremiah's God pledges to make Israel's enemy, Babylon, drunk and send it towards an eternal sleep, from which there would be no waking up (Jeremiah 51: 39.57) – another instance of sleep symbolising death is found here. Ezekiel's God promises to take out the wild animals and thus turn the woods into a safe sleeping place (Ezekiel 34: 25). King Nebuchadnezzar cannot find sleep due to dreams he is unable to make sense of (Daniel 2: 1), whereas Daniel falls into a state of deep sleep when Gabriel talks to him, thereafter touches him and lifts him up (8: 18, for a similar scene see 10: 9). The dead, of whom it is said in the final chapter of Daniel that they will live again, are called those who sleep "in the dust of the earth" (12: 2; KJV). Jonah, the unwilling prophet, is sleeping on a boat, yet not for long (Jonah 1: 5-6).

Apart from the many and various roles sleep plays in the texts mentioned, some general statements on how the Hebrew biblical authors thought about the nature of sleep can be found: Biblical scholar James Thomson (1955) claims that the ancient Jewish perspective on life was non-dualistic and only later Hellenistic influences imported a dualism of mind and body, a topic to which we shall return in the next chapter. From a Jewish perspective, sleep has been seen as a gift from God with recreating and healing effects, as Sonia Ancoli-Israel (2001) points out. It was also viewed as part of the rhythm of nature established by God the creator according to an extensive and unique exegetical study on sleep in the Old Testament (McAlpine 1987). Not identical with sleep is rest and its institutional guarantor, the Sabbath. As Erich

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these, he has admonished them to lead sober and wakeful lives, not to fall asleep and to guard their spiritual riches to prevent the enemy of salvation from sneaking in.

Fromm (1989: 36 et seqq.) pointed out in his doctoral thesis on the sociology of diaspora Judaism, the aim of the Sabbath has been to free humans from caring for the world, thus enabling them to create in accordance with religion. Judaism has recognised this law as its most sacred and foundational one, and rightly so, if we are to agree with Fromm. Humans are supposed to rest like God did on the seventh day of his work of creation. Fromm also stresses that the Sabbath is not for passive repose, but for religious, spiritual activity and creativity.

From this general overview of sleep in the Old Testament, let us now turn to Wisdom literature. In his attempt to define Wisdom, James L. Crenshaw (1981) raises four points: First of all, Wisdom encompasses certain books of the Old Testament: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, parts of Job, Sirach, and Wisdom of Solomon. Secondly, there are remarkable parallels to other wisdom traditions of the Near East. A third point consists in wisdom being a world-view shared over an extended period of time. Fourthly, Crenshaw enumerates the topics wisdom writings have in common, including “the dangers of adultery, the perils of the tongue, the hazards of strong drink, the enigma of undeserved suffering, the inequities of life, or the finality of death” (Crenshaw, 1981: 18). Furthermore, he says, form – such as proverbial statements – and content have to be united to make up a part of wisdom literature. One key feature of this content that is crucial for our interest in sleep is the “conviction that men and women possess the means of securing their well being – that they do not need and cannot expect divine assistance. From this humanistic stance they achieved an amazing breakthrough: the recognition that virtue is its own reward” (Op. cit.: 24). The Hebrew discipline (*musar*) aimed at self-control (Op. cit.: 83) and wisdom teaching served to motivate and internalise this socially desired behaviour. A too narrow perspective on Wisdom as a unifying concept has been criticised as a misguided, phantasmagoric modern invention. According to this critique, wisdom is knowledge about the right path to life approved by God and as such genuinely biblically, not externally influenced: “... Israel apparently adopted the advice literature simply as a vehicle for ideas already present in Jewish thought and culture: most of Proverbs is as quintessentially Jewish as its Egyptian counterparts are Egyptian” (Weeks, 1999: 26). Job, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs can be considered wisdom literature not in terms of a common genre or origin, but as descriptive of the subject-matter they deal with. Both Qohelet, the book also known as Preacher or Ecclesiastes, and the Proverbs belong to the Salomonic writings, with the first one nowadays usually dated at between 300-200

BCE, whereas it was formerly believed to have been written around 950 BCE (Galley et al., 2004: 276 et seq.). The process of text production appears to have been more complicated for Proverbs than for Qohelet. Some parts are thought to go back to the times of Solomon (tenth century BCE), the latest ones originated in the fifth century BCE, and others were written in-between. Qohelet, also known as Ecclesiastes, is most famous for its motif of “*Vanitas vanitatem*”, pointing towards a general meaninglessness of life in the face of which one still has to preserve one’s fear of God. Whereas the labourer’s sleep is described as “sweet”, the rich are plagued by insomnia (Eccl. 5: 12). A critique of restlessness concerns “the business that is done on earth, how one’s eyes see sleep neither day nor night” (8: 16), a futile undertaking due to the critic of vanity. More pronounced statements about sleep are to be found in Proverbs, on whose possible scribal authorship and on whether there is a plot to its structure or not the exegetes’ jury is still out. Wisdom and trust in God are the conditions for the “sweet” sleep of the addressee (Proverbs 3: 24). By contrast, the “wicked” ones need to do wrong in order to be able to sleep (4: 16). The poor and lazy person’s plight is a consequence of his behaviour, as the *Tun-Ergehen-Zusammenhang* postulating direct effects as consequences of one’s actions would have it. However, it has been noted that Proverbs is not built upon this concept: It notes that in reality the just can be poor and the unjust rich. Some commentators have stressed the proverbs’ ambiguity on social matters and their causes, its combination of an emphasis on hard work and care for the poor (Washington 1994). However that may be, the admonition is clear: “Give your eyes no sleep and your eyelids no slumber” (6: 4). We are also told to learn from the ant, who is pictured as a model of autonomy (“Without having any chief, officer or ruler...”), foresight and diligently planned production (“... she prepares her food in summer”), and the well-deserved reward of consumption (“... and gathers her sustenance in harvest”; 6: 7-8, RSV). Against this exemplar of industry, the representative of sloth is asked (rhetorically?): “How long will you lie<sup>61</sup> there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?” (6: 9). Crenshaw seems to admire the “matchless imagery” and “ridicule” that are poured over the slothful person, who has to face the dire consequences of his inactivity. Proverbs 6: 10-11, for Crenshaw (1981: 89) “almost personifies poverty and want”.

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<sup>61</sup> Horizontal and vertical positions as well as passing from the first to the latter, getting up and being resurrected, are discussed with reference to both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament in Le Bon (2002), according to whom “both verticality and ascension are symbols of spirituality” (Op. cit.: 225).

"A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man" (Proverbs 6: 10 et seq.; NIV).

Prudent gathering in summer and shameful sleeping in at harvest time are put in contrast, a prudent son versus one who is cause for shame (10: 5). Proverbs, in the judgment it passes on over-indulgent sleepers, constantly plays on two levels of meaning, the literal and the metaphorical ones. So much so, that both are inter-twined, and severing one from the other would distort the message. Thus 19: 15 is to be read and understood on *both* levels: "Laziness brings on deep sleep<sup>62</sup>; an idle person will suffer hunger." Sleep here encompasses mental listlessness as well as 'real' sleeping; the knowledge of everyday life about sleep is foundational for the metaphorical usage, which, in turn, is very much concerned with the material conditions of day-to-day living. "Do not love sleep or else you will come to poverty; open your eyes and you will have plenty of bread" (20: 13). This theme has been interpreted in terms of concrete family relations as implying "that whoever prefers sleep to work may anger the father enough to be cut out of the family inheritance. The converse expressed in the second colon is that an alert person will not lack for sustenance" (Longman III, 2006: 380). The imperative of wakefulness expressed in the previous sentence from Proverbs serves the same end as the following narrative does:

"I went past the field of the sluggard, past the vineyard of the man who lacks judgment; thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins. I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw: A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest — and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man" (Proverbs 24: 30-34; NIV).

The anecdote narrated here is a rare form in wisdom literature according to Crenshaw (1981: 75), who finds "a marvellous metaphor" in the concluding passage. This is, of course, the saying from Prov 6: 10-11, the message of which is repeated and underlined by the anecdote. Gerhard von Rad (1972: 37 et seq.) considered this an example of what he called "autobiographical stylization", largely based upon presentational conventions for didactic purposes. According to one interpretation of this text passage, we can read it as a poem about the folly of laziness: "The poet ponders the significance

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<sup>62</sup> An association of deep sleep with a moral defect, although not with sloth but with irrational thoughts, was made by Basilios the Great (+379), who likened the habit of deep sleep to dying anew each day (s. Hergemöller, 2002: 47).

of this spectacle and its lesson is salutary. He accepts *mūsār*, discipline, i.e., recognizes its necessity, and is convinced that indiscipline in the form of laziness is disastrous” (McKane, 1970: 576 et seq.). This emphasis on discipline in Proverbs is also stressed by the recent work of Galley et al. (2004: 257), who agree that this type of educational discipline is the “comprehensive, basic intention” (*übergreifende Grundintention*) of the book in question. They also draw attention to: the idea of specific, direct relations between one’s actions and their consequences (the so-called *Tun-Ergehen-Zusammenhang* mentioned above). This idea forms the backdrop to the proverbial condemnation of excessive sleep(iness), even if it is not characteristic for all of wisdom literature, as some have claimed. The connection between sleep and poverty can also be found in other proverbial traditions, such as the Arabic one that is likewise situated in an agricultural setting where making use of cooler temperatures early in the morning or at night has been a necessity (Kassis, 1999: 175 et seqq.). Harvest time is important in such a society, a fact which has been used to explain some of the harshness of the admonitions. On the other hand, the type scolded in Proverbs is the one who refuses to act. The biblical book “regards the sluggard with derision, chiefly because the type does not act. The ideal of the book is the self-actualizing person, someone who uses heart, lips, hands, feet” (Clifford, 1999: 232).

### *Sleep Discipline – Work Ethics – (No) Capitalism*

In his study of *Ancient Judaism*, Max Weber (1952) states that the Egyptian appreciation for duty, vocation and punctuality in work was a late development, unknown to Israel before the time of Jesus Sirach. Related to this issue is the question whether the Israelite-Jewish work ethics can be compared to the ascetic Protestant one. Wisdom did not know of any doctrine of predestination. Yet, the Protestant attempt to seek certainty of one’s salvation has promoted an ethics of inner-worldly action; this brings us back to Wisdom. Biblical scholarship has unearthed some of the similarities between the Old Testament wisdom literature and other Near Eastern likewise wisdom-orientated texts. Irving Zeitlin (1984) comes to see in these texts and the sort of education they were designed to promote a ‘proto-science’ that studies the biota of one’s environment and possibly also lists them. Is this an indicator for attempts at dominating nature and rationalisation? Anyhow, not all proto-science is of necessity

proto-Puritan. Werner Sombart (1922) held that both Jewish religion and capitalism were governed by the same ideas and inspired by the same *spirit* (*Geist*), a spirit of rationalist submission of nature. The scriptural base he relied upon was, in addition to the Torah, the wisdom literature and particularly the Proverbs, which he saw as the most important writing for his purposes and dated back to around 180 BCE. Sombart points to the business-like relationship between Yahwe and the people of Israel. For him, the covenant anticipated the capitalist business contract. This relation is even expressed in anthropological terms: “Homo Iudaeus and homo capitalisticus belong to the same species insofar as both are homines rationalistici artificiales” (Sombart, 1922: 281, transl. AF)<sup>63</sup>. One way of re-assessing the role of Judaism for the history of capitalism without neither falling into an anti-judaic or anti-semitic trap nor drawing a direct line from ancient Israel to modern capitalism has been to scrutinise the Protestant reception of the Old Testament and identification with Israel. How does sleep figure in all of this? What do the ethics of sleep and the practices of sleep discipline have to do with capitalism? Is the Puritan timing of sleep the successor of ancient Jewish sleep ethics, or is any other sleep discipline such a successor? Yet, maybe, the idea of succession is itself inappropriate when it comes to historical texts and contexts. Weber (1952) did not define Judaism as an ascetic<sup>64</sup> religion.<sup>65</sup> However, he conceded that in one respect it resembles rational, ascetic principles: in its imperative of unconditional self-restraint and alert self-control (“*wacher Selbstkontrolle*”). Judaism founded a rational, religious ethics of inner-worldly action, but it could not create the economic institutions that would have corresponded to it and permitted its further unfolding (Schluchter, 1981: 8). It is the imperative of wakefulness and alertness that concerns us here, as it has inspired the methods of controlling and subjecting actually and potentially sleeping bodies, sleep discipline/s. Both Weber and Fromm (1989: 40 et seqq.) underlined the differences between ascetic Protestant and Jewish economic ethics. Judaism is far from an attitude of inner-worldly asceticism, for which the world has a negative prefix – the Jewish law represents a positive system. It does not know of ‘time is money’, haste, professional, vocational ethics, and lack of contemplation. Rationalism is not yet capitalism, for

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<sup>63</sup> “Der homo Iudaeus und der homo capitalisticus gehören insofern derselben Spezies an, als sie beide homines rationalistici artificiales sind.”

<sup>64</sup> On asceticism in the later Rabbinic tradition, including sleeping on the bare floor and sleep deprivation, see: Satlow 2003.

<sup>65</sup> For Weber’s classification of religious orientations towards the world and their ascetic or contemplative/ecstatic character see: Schluchter 1988.

which devoting oneself to one's professional vocation is crucial (Op. cit.: 53). Fromm criticises Sombart for having drawn on nineteenth-century rabbis, who already represented capitalist culture, not Jewish tradition, and for having neglected those traditions that were not rationalistically orientated in Mishna, Kabbala and Chassidism. He agrees with Weber that Puritanism took from Jewish adventurers' pariah capitalism only what it could use for its very own brand of rational organisation and finds the spirits of both to be irreconcilable. The more general insistence on alert self-control, waking souls and avoidance of sloth can be found in the texts which are the focus of the next chapter.

## **5 Sleep, Soul, and Sloth: Anthropological Wake-Up Calls**

This chapter assembles what I would like to call anthropological wake-up calls of the Christian tradition. What I mean by this is that these calls and the sleep disciplines from which they stem and which they have, in turn, produced, deal with what it means to be human: Created as a human being, fallen, redeemed – Tradition has put different emphases on these aspects of Christian existence. Different ways of relating to the body and how it is supposed to connect with the soul have developed historically, and on these different types of thinking about sleep in either more concessionary or more regulatory ways have been devised. In the Early Christian writers Tertullian and Clement we encounter two different bearers of what Foucault called ‘pastoral power’ who are also representatives for problematising sleep in its relation to the flesh/body and the soul, a dualist and a dual one. This brings me on to some reflections on the question of duality and dualism. This question merits our attention, because it concerns an ideological feature crucial to Christianity and some of its successors. The emergent sociology of the body has rightly scrutinised this subject, and since Christian sleep discipline is entangled in a web of dual/ist constructions, we will have to examine this web. This is also a pressing question for gender studies, and it is hard to think of any intellectual pursuit in the social sciences that could profitably do without problematising gender relations. The discourses investigated in this part, by and large, all have in common that they are andro-centric ones, i.e. for them the prototypical human being is male. It seems that the ascetic ideal of the bold sleep-fighter has been built on a specific model of masculinity. Women figure rarely in the depictions of this ideal; if they do so, they do not in their own right or only in a minor role. Ascetic women aspired to a male/masculine ideal, and not merely in a spiritual sense, as the stories about religious women ‘passing’ as men attest. Amongst others, Joyce Salisbury (1992: 137, fn. 70) has stated that “the male-centred asceticism derived from a dualist view of the world that placed women in the carnal realm”. Therefore, the issue of dualism has to be pondered. How much women could take, that is in terms of sleep discipline: with how little sleep they could get by, was a moot point. John Wesley thought they needed an extra hour of sleep due to their bodily constitution. Apart from cases such as his, however, the texts tend to speak to a neutral subject – who, once the veil has been lifted,



appears to be surprisingly male. That is why something as seemingly marginal as choosing a personal pronoun turns into a challenging task. The decisions made depend on the contexts. From questions of duality and dualism we move on to the deadly sin of sloth embodied in the demon of Aikia, one manifestation of which is somnolence or drowsiness. Giving in to this sin means to turn away from God and thus to miss one's human destiny. Therefore wake-up calls warning against or calling out of sloth can be described as anthropological ones. John Donne's idea that the purpose of sleep is to refresh the body in this life and to prepare the soul for the next (s. Martin, 2003: 241) is equally just as much a statement about what it means to be human as about sleep.

The focus on sleep discipline/s has determined the selection of discourses and sources referred to. While there is no doubt that non-disciplinary discourses on sleep have existed, my research interest is in the disciplinary ones.<sup>66</sup> As for the sources consulted, a range of materials had to be excluded: From the phenomenon of dream<sup>67</sup>, the attraction of which has led to a deplorable overshadowing of sleep as we have seen in chapter 2, to more specific traditions, such as the 'spiritual sleep' of mysticism. Sleep poses an interesting challenge to ethics. If ethics is about (consciously) doing the right things or acting in the right manner, then sleep cannot serve as an immediate object of ethical imperatives: Sleep is the absence of conscious, purposive doing. If ethics, on the other hand, is about refraining from doing wrong (things) or from acting in the wrong manner, then sleep does not represent a candidate for ethics, either: Sleep is the absence of conscious refraining from purposively doing things or acting. However, it is not as simple as that as discourses on sleep, the soul, and sloth serve to illustrate.

Having dealt with biblical, both New and Old Testament, sources that were to serve as reference points for Christian sleep discipline/s, we will now take a look at relevant disciplinary formulations of the late second and early third centuries CE. In this context, the way in which one aspect of bodily existence comes to shape a discourse

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<sup>66</sup> I agree with Hergemöller (2002) and his distinction between the hegemonic discourse of sleep deprivation and secondary discourses, ranging from absolute prohibition of sleep to hedonistic, permanent sleep. While this distinction has been made in the context of a study on metaphoric, moral and metaphysic sleep in the Middle Ages, it has sufficient analytical value to be fruitfully applied beyond that time-frame. My focus is chiefly on the hegemonic discourse and its variations.

<sup>67</sup> Thus, the otherwise fascinating case of Finnish female sleep-preachers had to be left out as well. While Kirsi Stjerna's (2001) account of their doings is insightful, particularly as regards gender ideology, it clearly points to a limit phenomenon. Moreover, it has been disputed whether the women concerned were actually sleeping while preaching or not. Note, however, that the turning point for preacher Helena Konttinen was when a voice told her: "Now God has awakened you from the sleep of sin" (Op. cit.: 107)!

deserves particular attention: The notion of the flesh. Michel Foucault attributed the invention of the flesh to Tertullian, long before the eighteenth century came up with sexuality and the nineteenth one with sex. Tertullian emerges in this picture as having combined Christian ‘didache’ and principles eschewing gnostic dualism into a coherent theoretical discourse, that is: the discourse of the flesh.<sup>68</sup> Both Tertullian and his contemporary Clement addressed urban Christians, as Peter Brown, the expert for this era who is often credited with having pioneered the study of late antiquity, reminds us by highlighting the different attitudes they displayed towards their addressees: Urban Christians “to whom Tertullian would react with studied disapproval, in Carthage, and for whose complex needs Clement of Alexandria would write with gentle circumstantiality” (Brown, P., 1989: 72).

How do Tertullian and Clement construct sleep? Do their specific constructions manage to avoid body/soul[!] dualism and present a duality of soul and body instead? – the latter problem implying the further question of how duality and dualism can be distinguished. It will have to be borne in mind, though, that this problem is discussed with a focus on sleep and that generalisations about the overall field of ethics and the authors’ stances on issues other than sleep, particularly sexual ethics, cannot simply be derived from there.

### *Tertullian’s ‘De Anima’*

Tertullian, probably the oldest Christian author writing in Latin whose works have survived, was among those responsible for the invention of theological vocabulary. He often employed this new vocabulary for paradoxical and polemical purposes. Or, as was remarked upon him more recently: “Scholars call him a firebrand, a puritan, a misogynist, a rigorist and label him as impatient, uncompromising, fiery, passionate, ardent, harsh, sarcastic and even cruel ... It has been said that it is not easy to like

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<sup>68</sup> Probably the fourth volume of the *History of Sexuality* would be instructive about this discourse; however, the unfinished manuscript of *Les aveux de la chair* has not been published (so far?) because of Foucault’s own stated will against posthumous publications. We do find some clarifying remarks about the body-flesh distinction in the work of Peter Brown, who noted his indebtedness to Foucault (Brown, P., 1989: 9, fn. 17): “‘The flesh’ was not simply the body, an inferior other to the self, whose undisciplined stirrings might even at times receive a certain indulgent tolerance, as representing the natural claims of a physical being. In all later Christian writing, the notion of ‘the flesh’ suffused the body with disturbing associations: somehow, as ‘flesh’, the body’s weaknesses and temptations echoed a state of helplessness, even of rebellion against God, that was larger than the body itself” (Op. cit.: 48).

Tertullian” (Dunn, 2004: 10). Well, maybe we do not have to like him in order to grasp his sleep disciplinary position. Sleep is dealt with in Tertullian’s (1980) treatise on the soul, *De Anima*. This book was written some time in the early third century CE; Waszink (1947: 6\*) dates it between the years 210 and 213. It has been called the first Christian psychology. However, it is of course far from any psychology in the modern sense of the term, and such a classification is “apt to call up false associations, for this work is not in the first place a scientific treatise but a refutation of heretical doctrines about the soul” (Op. cit.: 7\*). To Tertullian dreams are morally indifferent, a view in which he has been influenced by Stoicism (Wittmer-Butsch, 1990: 96). Another Stoic idea, which Tertullian takes on board, is that the soul – like everything else that exists – is a corporeal entity. Augustine, who assumes that the soul is immaterial, will differ from him in that respect but stick to the idea that we are not morally accountable for the doings in our dreams. We shall return to this issue. Tertullian’s ‘soul’ has the form of the body/flesh and is of aerial colour; furthermore it has got the qualities of shape, limitation, length, height and breadth. It lives and breathes, is immortal, able to recognise, perceive, think and will. It inhabits the body/flesh, which it uses as an instrument (an XL: 2 et seq.). This brief description of the soul may suffice as background information in order to understand Tertullian’s concept of sleep.

Sleep appears as a mirror image of death, a natural<sup>69</sup> event of the mortal body, in which activity has ceased. It has priority over the other natural events, is a remedy and in line with reason. Its priority is supported by an analogy from Adam, who first slept before he went on to speak, eat and work. The awakening of the body/flesh is seen as confirmation of the resurrection of the dead. Thus sleep assumes a mystagogical function, initiating those who rise from sleep into faith, hope, death and life. Through sleep “you learn to be awake while you are sleeping” (an. XLIII: 12, transl. AF). The ecstatic soul’s dreams come either from demons or from God. ‘The evil one’ may try to overpower the saints during sleep, if he is unable to do so in their waking states. Fasting in true faith is recommended as a practice for becoming “friends of God” and acquiring the right, God-sent sort of dreams.

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<sup>69</sup> Sleep as natural is also found in Aquinas, who thought of sleep as paralysis or blocking of the *sensus communis* and of sense perception. He also knew that sleep could alleviate feelings of sadness and despair. As for the organ responsible for sleep, he does not come down clearly on one of two sides, the brain or the heart (Manzanedo 1997). However, the waking state is more valuable than sleep, in which judgment and intellect are impaired.

Tertullian rejects the idea of the soul as being absent from the body/flesh, wandering about and the like, during sleep. As to which sleep position is preferable for quiet dreaming, Plato's advice to avoid lying on one's back or on one's right side is referred to. Yet, Tertullian doubts the wisdom of these rules and suggests that there is no direct relation between sleeping position and dreaming, as otherwise dreams would be subject to one's will – an idea he discards, but one that is maybe not so far-off if one thinks of some discussions on lucid dreaming. The soul does not sleep<sup>70</sup>, the body by contrast has to; just as the soul does not die, but the body has to. The proper time for sleep, we learn, is night-time. Without sleep the soul could not function, as sleep is called the regenerator of the body as well as of strength and the tester of health; sleep finishes one's works and puts an end to suffering (an. XLIII: 7).

Although the attributes Tertullian invests sleep with seem to convey an appreciation of sleep, which is rare among other writers of the time (Bacht, 1977: 360), they are founded on a definite separation of body/flesh and soul (Hergemöller, 2002: 64). This separation is borne out by the different forms of behaviour accorded to both during sleep: A waking soul and a dormant body/flesh – an opposition also to be found later in Augustine's writings (s. Hergemöller, 2002: 40) – cannot be identical. The body/flesh is not only part of this world. Unsurprisingly, world<sup>71</sup>-rejecting as well as world-affirming traits have been discovered in Tertullian. In his study on Tertullian as the "first theologian of the West", as the title has it, Eric Osborn (1997) maintains that body/flesh was highly significant for salvation in this framework. He also informs us that "Tertullian, who is so fierce in his renunciation of the world, nevertheless defends the flesh and the goodness of the creation with stronger claims than any other early Christian writer" (Osborn, 1997: 237). In order to support this claim, the stress Tertullian places on the resurrection of the body/flesh is presented.

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<sup>70</sup> The motif of the soul waking during sleep can also be found in the fourth-century Christian poet Prudentius's *Hymn before sleep*. "Sleep's gentle charm" is praised, as are the rest and relief from labour sleep brings along. Yet, the final verse reveals the author, who was indeed influenced by Tertullian:

"And, though the weary body

Relaxed in sleep may be,

Our hearts, Lord e'en in slumber,

Shall meditate on Thee" (Prudentius 1905). Prudentius' *Hymn at Cock-Crow* has Christ expelling sleep and freeing one from the *Vanitas* of dreams.

<sup>71</sup> In a remarkable study on nineteenth-century French nuns, Odile Arnold draws attention to two different meanings of 'world' or, in French, 'monde' designating two realities, which have often been confounded: "le monde, lieu de la vie des hommes, et le monde, fermeture de l'esprit à la lumière de Dieu" (Arnold, 1984: 24).

Still and interestingly, there is a point about the ‘*usefulness*’ of body/flesh after resurrection, which “is not in question because in the presence of God there will be no idleness” (Ibd., referring to Tertullian’s *De Resurrectione Mortuorum* 60.9). Let us spell this out more clearly: Even the resurrected body/flesh has to serve a function, has to be of use, and must by any means not be idle. The latter it cannot even be any longer, because God’s presence prevents body/flesh from idleness – the presence of a God, who obviously operates under the laws of instrumental rationality!

### *Clement’s ‘Paidagogos’*

From a Latin writer we now turn to a Greek one, from the author supposed to have been the first theologian to the one who has been credited with being the first Christian philosopher. A sleep story of pre-resurrectional rationality is told in Clement of Alexandria’s *Paidagogos*, also known in English as *The Instructor*. In his celebrated study on sexual renunciation in Early Christianity, Peter Brown (1989: 126; 31) recognises in this educational opus “a triumph of ‘paedagogic reason’”, whose author sought to surpass the Greek philosophers by not only taming passion but by feeling no desires at all and thus transforming the body. The text was written for newly baptised Christians to guide them on their new way of life. Written at about the end of the second century CE, Clement’s book has a chapter devoted to sleep that reminds one of present-time examples of sleep advice. Apart, that is, from the religious and some (but maybe not all?) of its ascetic orientation. While echoing stoic teaching, Clement was “concerned, to a large extent, with elaborating Christian asceticism from anthropological and cosmological considerations” (Behr, 2000: 21). Due to this orientation, the tune of anti-hedonism is played from the start. All luxury in bed and its accessories are prohibited to Clement’s Christians (Clemente, 1994: II: IX), and there is a long list of prohibited items. This frugal approach, however, is combined with one of utility: Soft bedding may harm one’s body, as it does not permit to change one’s posture in sleep easily. It also does not help digestion<sup>72</sup>. What Clement recommends is an even mattress to sleep on, for this would promote digestion and allow one to get up promptly if needed. It is a natural or physical ‘gymnasium’ (*gymnásion physikón*) (IX: 77.3) for sleep. The lack of appeals to

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<sup>72</sup> The digestive function of sleep is a recurrent topic in the literature, often conjoined with what we may term proto-scientific explanations, as in Gregory of Nyssa’s reflections on sleep, yawning and dreams.

renunciation and mastering the body in this paragraph is conspicuous. However, there is not only a conspicuous absence but also an unsuspected, astonishing presence in this text. Foucault emphasised the significance of renunciation and the mastering of the body in asceticism and monastic discipline, and he tried to explain in what ways the new disciplines have differed from these older ones. One aspect he found crucial for the new disciplines but relatively lacking in the old ones is increased utility (*majorations d'utilité*, Foucault, 1975: 162). Clement's instructions do not conform to Foucault's schema, for they are clearly and outspokenly orientated towards utility. Clement's bed is simple and avoids the extremes. The motivation for this practice is not primarily to be seen in self-renunciation and the mastering of the body: Reason and reasonable behaviour are encouraged. Clement's bed has to be moderately soft<sup>73</sup> – in this passage, as in several others, Peter Brown (1989: 123) admires “the unflagging, gentle precision of his vignettes of Christian deportment” that, through liveliness and presence of the text, create upon the reader the impression of her/his actually being there with Clement. Yet, the latter's rational reflections about moderation in sleep give way to considerations about waking. Or, perhaps, the thoughts on waking are the logical conclusion of a rationality of utility? Starting with a quote from the parable of the good servants watching out for their master's return, a justification for the imperative wakefulness is elaborated: Like a dead man, a sleeping man is without use. Therefore, frequent rising at night to praise God and to keep watch and stay awake for and towards him, thus imitating the angels, is prescribed. The uselessness of the sleeper is further radicalised by a statement of his worthlessness, and the analogy with the dead is repeated – an idea that Clement has borrowed from Plato.<sup>74</sup> The uselessness of the sleepers is a recurrent motif and often coupled with injunctions to wakefulness even while one is asleep.<sup>75</sup> From these negative statements, Clement draws the positive conclusion that one has to stay awake for as long as possible without endangering one's health. Excessive eating and drinking

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<sup>73</sup> The softness of beds has been a recurring topic throughout the times. Sixteenth-century poet, composer and cleric Ludovico Agostini, for example, believed in the spiritual value of physical remedies and that “by denying it [the body] atrophying sleep and soft beds, the intellect retains its sharpness and the body the strength and vigour of all its limbs” (quoted after: Camporesi, 1988: 70). As proof for this, hermits are mentioned in droves who reached a healthy longevity.

<sup>74</sup> On the uselessness of the sleeper and his/her unnatural forgetfulness of duty in Plato's thought, see: Hergemöller, 2002: 52.

<sup>75</sup> Another example for this line of reasoning can be found in twelfth-century William of St Thierry and a letter he wrote to his Cartusian hosts to encourage them in pursuing their way of life (Wittmer-Butsch, 1990: 49).

are rejected as irrational behaviours, illustrated by vivid pictures of the unquiet sleep of those who had too much of either or both. Whereas Tertullian confined himself to declaring night-time the proper time for sleeping, this is not good enough for Clement. He urges his students to get up during the night and work: Reading is a recommended practice, or starting one's day's work early; women ought to spin wool. Gradually, one is to fight (*diamachetéon*) sleep to get more time out of one's life (81.5). Napping during the day is also banned. This would be a sign of an unfit soul, and a true one is not in need of sleep. Interestingly, Clement has not yet given up the hope to see the end of days. However, the return of Christ does not seem to have been expected as being immediately at hand in this religious pedagogics. If it was, the ethical severity could be understood as an attempt to speed up the process. Probably, this is what Clement has in mind for the Parousia. Nevertheless, already now the believer is obliged to choose sleep-deprivation and wakefulness of body as well as of soul.

### *Sleep-Friendly Dualism vs. Anti-Sleep Duality*

We have seen how the dual of body/flesh – soul was interpreted differently by Tertullian and Clement in their different prescriptions for sleep. Overall, it seems, Tertullian's position is friendlier towards sleep and sleepers than is Clement's. However, Tertullian's apparent sleep-friendliness is bought at a considerable price in terms of body/flesh-soul relations, at the price of dualism. It is important to stress that this is the very specific dualism of waking soul and dormant body/flesh, and that in other respects Tertullian's ethics might well be described as non-dualist. Interestingly, these other respects are those concerning which he takes a more rigorist position: matters of sexuality.

It is the issue of sexual renunciation that Peter Brown (1989: 77) has in mind, when he rejects any simple subsumption of Tertullian under the heading of dualism:

"He was not a 'dualist' in any way. Indeed, *his insistence on the control of the body was so rigorous* precisely because he believed that it was directly through the body and its sensations that the soul was tuned to the high pitch required for it to vibrate to the Spirit of God. The soul was a subtle, invisible, but concrete 'body', 'set in the mould' of the outer body" (Italics AF).

Joyce E. Salisbury (1992: 12), on the other hand, sees a “basically dualistic” view at work in Tertullian and others, in the sense of “a clear division between that which was carnal (sexual) and that which was not (spiritual)”. This dualism applies to earth after the Fall. Flesh and body are not identical, with flesh representing an abstract principle, opposed to the principle of spirit. Due to this distinction of body and flesh, “a spiritual life could convert the individual’s body into a vehicle of sanctity” (Op. cit.: 13) and “a temple of God” or, on the other hand, quoting Jerome, into “a brothel in which ‘the members of Christ’ had been ‘prostituted’” (Ibd.). Obviously, Brown and Salisbury have quite different ideas about what counts as a dualist view. As far as sleep goes, though, we have found the much more rigorous insistence on bodily control in Clements’s educational treatise. Ironically, his also seems to be the less dualist position of the two: The waking body in conformity with the waking soul is the ideal he preaches ultimately. In this light, his rules for useful sleeping arrangements only concern the inevitable, unavoidable need for sleep. This has to be restricted as much as possible, since the sleeper is a useless being. The quest for utility defines what is useful even within a general uselessness. This comparison encourages us to think about duality and dualism, also because they form a constant underlying theme of this study.

### *Some Reflections on Duality/Dualism*

Feminist theory (e.g. Grosz 1994) and the sociology of the body (Williams, S./Bendelow 1998; Crossley 2001) have alerted us to the dualist legacy of occidental thought. They have worked on and out conceptual means to overcome it. Those who think in dualisms are likely to be accused of reductionism, and who wants to be a reductionist? Instead of adding to the battle of the Isms, I propose some reflections on how dualities and/or dualisms have played out in sleep discipline. René Descartes is often charged as main culprit when the history of dualisms is told in a somewhat limited manner. His meditations are seen to have justified the dualism of mind and body by his famously distinguishing between *Res cogitans* and *Res extensa* and his claiming even more famously: *Cogito ergo sum*. The dual/ism/s present and represented in sleep discipline, though, pre-date Cartesius by far. Since dual/ist thought is a certain way of thinking, its relevance far extends the topics of sleep and sleep discipline. Still, pondering the question of this way of thinking might shed some light on how it has affected the



disciplining of sleep – as in the examples of sleep-dualist Tertullian and sleep-dual Clement discussed above.

Not only is the dual/ism of sacred and profane the first that comes to mind when religious sleep discipline is pondered in terms of dual/ism/s, this very sacred-profane divide has been considered as something like the origin of all dualisms, too. Durkheim's theory of *Homo duplex*, the dual nature of humanity traditionally conceived of as body and soul, points to that: "La dualité de notre nature n'est donc qu'un cas particulier de cette division des choses en sacrées et en profanes qu'on trouve à la base de toutes les religions, et elle doit s'expliquer d'après les mêmes principes" (Durkheim, 2002: 11). Two problems arise with this position: First, it is debatable on what grounds one could argue for an origin as an ontic priority of one dualism over against the others. Second, it has to be asked how rigid the binarisation of sacred and profane has ever been. It is inherent in Durkheim's concept of the sacred and the holy things that are kept apart and forbidden. Yet, does the ethnographic base on which this argument is founded, thinking of *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, allow for the universalistic statement about sacred and profane? The sleep that is reduced and of which one is deprived is profane. The sleep that facilitates visions of God etc. may be invested with an aura of the sacred. However, this sacred is fragile, for some dreams were believed to have originated with devil and demons, as we have seen in Tertullian's *De Anima*.

Another basic dual/ism in religious sleep discipline is the one of body/flesh and soul, traditionally divided by the mortality – immortality dual/ism. Yet again, the separation is not absolute: Tertullian believed in the resurrection of the body. To this dual/ism of body/flesh and soul another one is added, the very dual/ism that is constitutive for the type of discipline under scrutiny: the dual/ism of waking and sleeping. In a constellation of dual/ism/s then the waking soul confronts the sleeping body/flesh. Even where the need to sleep is granted and not much deprivation<sup>76</sup> (here represented by Clement of Alexandria) called for, sleep still 'suffers' from a human, earthly stain. It stands in line with body/flesh, the mortal, and the profane – in this

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<sup>76</sup> Arnold Angenendt's (2000) monumental book on medieval religiosity names Origen as the key figure for having introduced a dualist asceticism into a theretofore non-dualist Christianity. The portrait of Origen in Eusebius's church history also has something to say on his personal sleep discipline: According to this account he spent most of the night studying scripture, slept little, and what little he slept he did so on the bare floor rather than in a bed (see: Angenendt, 2000: 563). Angenendt also mentions as representatives of dualist ideas gnosticism for the early church and catharism for the medieval church (Op. cit.: 113 et seq.).

company thought of as so very much inferior to the other one: the soul, the immortal, and the sacred. Compared to this constellation, the harsher solution appears to be less dual/istic: There sleep is fled on the assumption of a congruence or at least unidirectionality of body/flesh and soul. In Clement's pre-apocalyptic waking world sleep does not have a home. At a second glance, however, the hidden duality of this world-view reveals itself. It is founded upon the rejection of this world or 'the world' and things 'worldly', in other words: a rejection of the profane.

Conjoined to this table of opposites:

Sacred – Profane

Soul – Body/flesh

Immortality – Mortality

Waking – Sleep

God – World

is the dual/ism of

Activity – Passivity.

The moralistic exhortations of Old Testament wisdom literature appear to be closely related to this latter dual/ism. The insistence on recent sleep research and its findings that show sleep not at all to be a passive state does not change the fact that sleep is widely perceived as lack of activity. Even if we take into account all the mind/brain processes and bodily movements during sleep, all these sorts of activities will hardly ever reach that crown of sociological creation: action. It is action that the sleep disciplines of religious and secular provenances call for, and it is action that sociology has hailed, and sleep is not in it (neither in action, nor in sociology, or at least not in most of it). Action and/or non-action in sleep have been debated regarding dreams. In his *Confessiones* (X: 30), Augustine takes his experience of dreams of 'fornication' as a starting point to ponder the nature of morality. He reflects on the question of responsibility for one's dreams and comes to the conclusion that due to the gulf that separates sleeping from waking life – and by extension involuntary happenings from voluntary actions –, he is not morally culpable for the contents of his dreams, as long as he does not shape and nurture them in the wrong way. To this it has been answered that there are voluntary dreams or at least such components, and that a case can be

made for involuntary sins (Flanagan, 2000: 179-183). Augustine, of course, ends his reflection by appealing to God for his help in not assenting to “those degrading corruptions which by means of sensual images actually disturb and pollute the flesh” (Augustine, 2001: 231). In the preceding book, Augustine had remembered how he mourned for his mother, and how he felt better after sleep and thereupon was able to openly admit and show his sadness. Having woken from sleep, he thinks of Ambrose’s hymn to God as giver of sleep, its peace, and its restorative function for body and mind: “That peace may fall on loosened limbs/To make them strong for work again,/To raise and soothe the tired mind/And free the anxious from their care” (Op. cit.: IX: 13: 199).

Similarly approving of the positive effects sleep has on body and soul/mind, is the dual, but not necessarily dualist position, we find in Hildegard of Bingen (1991). In her *Causae et Curae*, which was written around 1150 CE and amended later, the wake-up calls are thoroughly anthropological while being cosmological at the same time: In her world-view, the human being created by God is a micro-cosm, a miniature kosmos, and as such an orderly being. Sleep helps both body and soul to grow and muster strength<sup>77</sup>, a help humans are in need of due to original sin. Sleep is likened to food and strengthens bones and blood, flesh and limbs, but also enhances wisdom and knowledge. According to Hildegard, who states pollutions in a rather matter-of-fact manner, the soul is warmer in sleep than in the waking state. Like air moving a mill-wheel, the soul moves the body in sleep. Its tendency towards the good moves the body with its tendency towards sin and wakes it if it has assumed a wrong posture; the soul is the light of waking as well as of sleeping bodies. Hildegard states a positive effect of frequent changes between sleeping and waking states. This makes her an early and somewhat unexpected advocate of the napping culture. Yet, she warns against excessive sleep: This may lead to fever and sight problems, since the eyes have been shut for too long. Moderate sleep, she holds, ensures health, while both extremes of too much and too little sleep are to be avoided. Moderate wakefulness is thus what Hildegard recommends.

We have mentioned the Stoic traces in Clement’s and in Tertullian’s thought, and it is certainly not appropriate to conflate ancient Greek or Roman and Judeo-Christian views of the body. However, the difference between the two that Mellor/Shilling (1997:

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<sup>77</sup> This view was shared by Albert the Great in the thirteenth century. He held that sleep ensured the unity of one’s sense impressions and thus served the refreshment of both body and soul (s. Hergemöller, 2002: 69).

95, fn. 5, It. or.) want to establish is questionable: “While the dominant emphasis in Graeco-Roman society was on *disciplining* the body (in order to maintain vital bodily heats and minimise the links humans had with the animal world), early Christianity was concerned with *transforming* the fallen human body”. Somehow, the italics seem to be in the wrong places. Is there really any substantive difference between disciplining and transforming the body? Or is the idea, at least the Christian one, not to discipline the body *in order to* transform it? Yet, according to Pierre Hadot’s (1995) studies on philosophical exercises in antiquity the idea of transcending the self had already been part and parcel of the ‘pagan’ outline. Furthermore, the two modes of dealing with the body that Mellor and Shilling present us with refer to different levels of meaning and types of motives, and they do not necessarily contradict, perhaps not even fully contrast with, one another.

### *Sinful Sloth and Sleep/iness*

“Throughout history, people have interpreted one set of sleeping patterns as slothful, another as indicative of industriousness. In the words of Dr. Samuel Johnson, as recounted by Boswell: ‘I have all my life long, been lying in bed until noon: yet I tell all young men, and tell them with great sincerity, that nobody who does not rise early will ever do any good’ ” (Moore-Ede, 1993: 43).

Human beings are prone to sloth, a state that was seen as being caused by the midday demon. This demon was said to have first attacked monks in the desert<sup>78</sup>, those of the anchoritic type being especially vulnerable to its onslaught. The sin of sloth was known to Benedict and his Rule as well. In its Prologue the starting situation is that the student of the Rule has so far left God “by the sloth of disobedience” (RSB, 1909: 1). Benedict institutionalises manual labour against idleness, which he takes to be the enemy of the soul (xlvi: 84). Sloth has been listed as one of the seven deadly sins, in which recent years have seen an increasing popular interest. Attempts at re-interpreting the “Seven” – this itself a movie title indicative of the popular interest – abound. This is not a very remarkable fact as such, since book market and culture industry do draw on a variety of motifs and materials, including religious ones. More remarkable is the fact that

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<sup>78</sup> What monastic life in the desert as a counter-world or alternative city meant for those who chose it has been concisely set out by Peter Brown: “The myth of the desert was one of the most abiding creations of late antiquity. It was, above all, a myth of liberating precision. It delimited the towering presence of ‘the world’, from which the Christian must be set free, by emphasizing a clear ecological frontier. It identified the process of disengagement from the world with a move from one ecological zone to another, from the settled land of Egypt to the desert. It was a brutally clear boundary, already heavy with immemorial associations” (Brown, 1989: 216).

many of these publications accept the sins as a moral framework, one, to be sure, that needs some re-adjustment, but that nevertheless got the basic, normative parameters right.

An approach less interested in the normative dimension of outright moralism is to be found in the UK Economic and Social Research Council's report *Seven Deadly Sins: A new look at society through an old lens* (ESRC 2005). This collection of articles uses the concept of deadly sins as a framework within which the presentation of research topics and results of empirical research are arranged. Published for the Social Science Week 2005, it was meant to showcase this work and introduce it to a broader public. The chapter on sloth (Jeffery 2005), for instance, deals with decreasing voter turn-out in the UK General Elections and asks how this is due to voters' slothfulness. In conclusion, however, it is more inadequate political outreach strategies and politicians' complacency than the sum of individuals' sloth that are seen to be responsible for this recent development. That this development endangers democracy, however, is confirmed by a quote from Ecclesiastes 10: 18 which prefaces the article: "By much slothfulness the building decayeth"; even though it is not slothfulness that is the problem. While this piece of social science enables us to take a welcome break from lamentations of moral decline, the genre of self-help brings us back to them. Self-help literature and even the mocking of self-help, which constitutes a way of negative self-help (prime example for this: Wasserstein 2005) re-affirm the old message. As for the sins in general, this is also true for the sin of sloth and how it is dealt with. Thus, Wendy Wasserstein's poking fun at a presumably growing sloth movement to which she contributes its manual in a tongue-in-cheek manner is an exercise in consciousness-raising: You really don't want to end up being a slothful person. The ideals of hard work and achievement are sneaking in through the backdoor, as it were. Of course, there is a kernel of truth in Wasserstein's diagnosis. If not a 'sloth movement', at least there is now an international Slow Movement. From Marx's son-in-law Paul Lafargue via Bertrand Russell to Tom Hodgkinson laziness has found its advocates. It should not be forgotten in this context that Lafargue (1973) criticised Christianity for having sanctified and thus justified alienated labour. Although the trust Lafargue set in the machine's capacity for liberating humankind may have been misplaced, his statement that we are living in an epoch of work still holds true. Strategies of, if not sanctification, certainly justification of work can be detected in the current anti-sloth discourse, as exemplified by Wasserstein. A chord similar to Wasserstein's, although less fun-orientated, is struck by Werner (2000), whose book on the sins promises "Insights into the abysses of human passion". He gives us a description of the midday demon

according to fourth-century Egyptian Evagrius Ponticus<sup>79</sup>: The demon of Akeidia or midday demon is the most annoying of demons. From the fourth until the eighth hour, from late morning to the afternoon, he plagues the monk. Akeidia and its demon make the sun appear motionless and the day endless. Within the monk's mind they create restlessness and impatience with the slow flow of time. The monk comes to hate the place he is in, also his work, his unloving brothers, the general lack of comfort and even life itself (Werner, 2000: 195).

Evagrius dealt with what he held to be evil thoughts (*logismoi*), to each of which corresponded a demon. His aphoristic advice *Ad Monachos* takes into account both the physical and spiritual effects of excessive sleep: It is said to "thicken" thought, whereas a vigil would promote it. In addition to that, the reckless sleeper invites temptations to haunt him. Anyway, not always is forgoing sleep the best option; compared to a vigil conducted with "idle thoughts" on the monk's mind, the one who lies down to sleep fares better. If we would pray with the right attitude, however, the vigil could help us in fighting demons. Those who do not "fill" themselves with sleep attain purity and the coming of God's spirit (Evagrius 2003: 49, 56, 58). The torturing tactics put to use by the demon of Akeidia are laid out in an early account of "the most oppressive of all demons" (quoted after: Wenzel, 1967: 5):

"If during those days anybody annoyed the monk, the demon would add this to increase the monk's hatred. He stirs the monk also to long for different places in which he can find easily what is necessary for his life and can carry on a much less toilsome and more expedient profession. It is not on account of the locality, the demon suggests, that one pleases God. He can be worshipped everywhere. To these thoughts the demon adds the memory of the monk's family and of his former way of life. He presents the length of his lifetime, holding before the monk's eyes all the hardships of his ascetic life. Thus the demon employs all his wiles so that the monk may leave his cell and flee from the race-course" (Ibd.).

From the demonic psycho-terror expressed in these lines, it is not a long way to later developments. In modern times, Akeidia has often been identified with melancholy and/or depression. There has been a tendency towards interiorising it, towards abstracting from its physical, bodily manifestation as sleepiness and exclusively focusing on its being a mental state. Originally, both aspects were united. The listlessness of heart and mind formed part of the same phenomenon that drew the ascetic to "seek solace in slumber" from being tired of life. Werner does not shy away from endorsing the traditional judgment against sloth/Akeidia and condemns the nihilistic outlook on life this sin promotes: "It is rightly called the mother of all deadly

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<sup>79</sup> On Evagrius's background see: Brown, 1989: 373 et seqq.

sins; for in a devilish manner it has managed to bring into life that which is deadly” (Op. cit.: 212, transl. AF)<sup>80</sup>. Unwittingly, this strong statement implies a reference to the analogy of death and sleep.

Death comes into play in a somewhat different nuance as well: The monks plagued by Akeidia were advised to think of death, “as if you had to die the next day”, to fend off the sin (Evagre, 1971: II: 28). This mental or spiritual exercise has been rediscovered time and time again. Another illustrious example is from Thomas Browne’s 1642 *Religio Medici* with its ironic twist: “We term sleep a death; and yet it is waking that kills us, and destroys those spirits that are the house of life ... It is that death by which we may be literally said to dye daily” (Browne, 1960: 118). Beyond speculative thought, the practice Browne encourages consists of a prayer, by which one hopes to use sleep to prepare for death, upon which there is not any more sleep, but only perpetual waking. Readers have often felt that Browne’s writings were difficult to place religiously; however, his advice on sleep as ‘dress rehearsal’ for death, to recall Bauman’s and Simon Williams’s thoughts on the subject, is rather ecumenical in outlook.

In the case of Evagrius, to be sure, sleep is generated by Akeidia and its demon. This link between the sin and sleep is strengthened by the order of chapters in Evagrius’s advice to the monks, as has been highlighted in a recent commentary on the work: “the placement of a chain on listlessness after one on sleep (M 46-52) is no accident. Sleep is one of the ways in which the demon of listlessness causes his trouble” (Evagrius 2003: 266, fn. 100). He does so in quite a physical manner, by weighing heavily on his victim and inducing him to sleep.<sup>81</sup>

### *‘Sloth’/‘Akeidia’ and its Demon*

John Cassian (ca. 360-435 CE) has been influenced by Evagrius, whose disciple he had been in Egypt (Brown, P., 1989: 420). In his *De institutis coenobiorum* (Cassien 2001), Cassian sets out the structure of monastic communal life and the eight principal faults a monk has to struggle against: Gluttony, fornication, covetousness, anger, dejection, accidie, vain-glory and pride. Here, a weary and distressed heart has been hit by what the Greek term ‘Akeidia’ means. It particularly befalls monks around the sixth hour, which is noon. This state of mind, likened to a burning fever, as Cassian says, was

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<sup>80</sup> “Sie wird zu Recht die Mutter aller Todsünden genannt; denn es ist ihr auf teuflische Weise gelungen, das Tödliche selbst schon ins Leben hineinzuholen” (Werner, 2000: 212).

<sup>81</sup> Which is why the Guillaumonts’ commentary recognises in the demon a remote successor to the ‘spirit of sleep’ from the apocryphal *Testament of Reuben* (see: Evagre, 1971: I: 88).

identified by some elders as the midday demon of the ninetyeth Psalm. This psalm is also quoted in Wenzel's (1967) magisterial study on the sin of sloth. The midday demon was sometimes seen as the originator of Akeidia, sometimes as Akeidia (im)pure and simple (Jackson, 1981: 175), the latter position being what Cassian had in mind. The psalm in itself does not limit itself to one of these two interpretations:

"His truth shall compass thee with a shield: thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night. Of the arrow that flieth in the day, of the business that walketh about in the dark, of invasion, or of the *noonday devil*" (Ps 90:6, quoted after Wenzel, 1967: 7; Italics AF).

Due to Cassian, the monk attacked by the devil/demon – the translation of the Vulgate follows the Septuagint with *daemonio meridiano* – feels the urge to leave his cell and to visit his fellow-monks, or to sleep. Both reactions are seen as giving in to Akeidia and thus as sinful behaviour with the sleep of the soul as an especially dangerous threat. Practically, there is also the trap of abstention from work, the sanctification of which can be detected in the *Institutes*. They condemn the sinner, who is overpowered by laziness or Akeidia and indulges himself in idleness. Akeidia needs to be faced in order to be overcome: That is the moral lesson Cassian has in store for the monks. The right way of dealing with the midday demon<sup>82</sup> is therefore not to seek refuge in aimlessly wandering around or in succumbing to sleep but to triumph over temptation.

Later on in the history of the concept, Akeidia was more and more grasped as being about a state of mind, rather than about its physical manifestations – a shift in emphasis that seems to have occurred from the eleventh to the twelfth century and was confirmed by the scholasticism of the thirteenth century (Wenzel 1967; Jackson 1981). Aquinas's<sup>83</sup> definition of Akeidia as *Tristitia de bono spirituali* ("sadness about a spiritual good that has to be achieved") is part and parcel of this spiritualising process. This peculiar form of sadness was also increasingly thought of as an emotional disorder – often close to or identical with melancholia, a conceptual process that fully developed in the sixteenth century, when "images which had traditionally portrayed Akeidia came to be used to portray melancholy" (Jackson, 1981: 184) – to be tackled by medical scrutiny. It was however already back in the thirteenth century that the Greek-Latin Akeidia or Acedia was turned into the English "Sloth", derived from 'slow', a vice the virtue of "busyness" was set up against (Wenzel, 1967: 89).

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<sup>82</sup> That the idea of a sleep demon can be used to excuse oneself as a human being and put the blame on the demon, is shown for the contemporary Japanese context by the case of dozing Parliamentarians in Steger, 2004: 265.

<sup>83</sup> As far as sleep is concerned, Aquinas, was not in favour of the practice of *Agrypnia*, if it tended to interfere with someone's duties during the day, e.g. in the case of a bishop (s. Hergemöller, 2002: 70 et seq.).



Of course, the doctrine of sloth used biblical references to support its claims. Two of these we have encountered already: Proverbs was quoted profusely by those preaching against Akeidia. And the Gethsemane scene also figured prominently; or, as Petrus de Limoges had it: “By the sleeping disciples are indicated the *accidiosi*, whose inner eyes are heavy with the sleep of indolence” (quoted after: Wenzel 1967: 102). As one of the favourite remedies against Akeidia work has been recommended (Kaelber, 1998: 65).

*Slothful Clerics, “scarcely awakened by the diurnal concerts of the birds”:  
An illustration from the Fourth Lateran Council (1215)*

More generally, as well as more particularly to readers of Michel Foucault’s work, the Fourth Lateran Council is remembered for having decreed the duty to confess one’s sins, at least once a year. Its impetus for reform did a lot to popularise Akeidia as sloth and to extend its scope from being a concern of monastics to being one of each and every faithful (Wenzel, 1967: 176). This twelfth ecumenical council held by pope Innocent III also had something in store for, or rather against, those clerics who slothfully neglected their liturgical duties:

“It is a matter for regret that there are some minor clerics and even prelates who spend half of the night in banqueting and in unlawful gossip, not to mention other abuses, and in giving the remainder to sleep. They are scarcely awakened by the diurnal concerts of the birds. Then they hasten through matins in a hurried and careless manner. There are others who say mass scarcely four times a year and, what is worse, do not even attend mass, and when they are present they are engaged outside in conversation with lay people to escape the silence of the choir; so that, while they readily lend their ears to unbecoming talk, they regard with utter indifference things that are divine. These and all similar things, therefore, we absolutely forbid under penalty of suspension, and strictly command in virtue of obedience that they celebrate diligently and devoutly the diurnal and nocturnal offices so far as God gives them strength” (can. 17, quoted after: *Medieval Sourcebook*).

This lively account lists all sorts of priestly wrongdoings. Not only are the sinners given to sloth, gluttony comes in as well, and whatever the unexplained “other abuses” might refer to. ‘Banqueting’ and gossiping for “half of the night” is obviously not what the pope has in mind for his clergy, however, the other half of the night that is spent asleep by his wayward sheep is an issue of concern to the pastor as well. After all, this assorted misbehaviour has come to replace the practice of nightly prayers, and with its effect of sleeping-in it also affects the daily prayer routine.

## *Sloth and Teaching Calculated Time*

The calculability of time was to become a dominant motif of instrumental rationality. That time flies – ‘tempus fugit’ – and is therefore precious was known to ancient philosophers and Christian theologians alike. In the fourteenth century, however, Jacques Le Goff (1977b) has found that and how this motif became more pressing and dramatic, how losing one’s time turned into both sin and scandal. Here the model of money and the type of the merchant are taken as blue-prints for an eager spirituality. Dominican friar Domenico Cavalca (+1342) and his writings about losing, preserving and accounting for time are referenced. What makes this case so interesting for us is that it is the old topos of sloth that is being married to the new calculating spirituality:

“A partir de considerations traditionelles sur l’oisiveté, il parvient, à travers un vocabulaire de marchand (le temps perdu c’est pour lui le talent perdu de l’Évangile – le temps c’est déjà de l’argent), à toute une spiritualité de l’emploi calculé du temps. L’oisif qui perd son temps, ne le mesure pas, est semblable aux animaux, ne mérite pas d’être considéré comme un homme ... Ainsi naît un humanisme à base de temps bien calculé (Le Goff, 1977b: 77).

Education was the most important means of inculcating this spirit of calculability. From early on, Christian children of whatever persuasion they or rather their parents or supervisors were had to become trained in being purposefully employed. The more negative the view of wo/man was, the more educational efforts had to be made. This effort was highlighted by Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892), who combined Methodist conversion with subsequent Baptist identity – although personally he was at odds with his denomination in later life. In the second half of the nineteenth century he was known as the ‘Prince of Preachers’. Spurgeon was keen on preserving the Puritan heritage, and so was his *alter ego* John Ploughman who speaks thus in 1868:

“Who can bring a clean thing out of the unclean? A wild goose never lays a tame egg. Our boys will be off to the green with the ne’er-do-wells unless we make it greener still at home for them, and train them up to hate the company of the slothful. Never let them go to the ‘Rose and Crown’; let them learn to earn a crown while they are young, and grow the roses in their father’s garden at home. Bring them up bees and they will not be drones” (Spurgeon, 1988: 194).

The androcentrism of this discourse is remarkable, and its patriarchal world of father and son seems to be a rather closed one. However, the animal imagery does not quite fit the bill, unwittingly so, as we may assume: Spurgeon himself chooses the analogy of a goose, not a gander – and that the boys are to be brought up to be worker bees instead of drones is probably not meant as an encouragement of effeminisation. Yet, the irony

remains that an education aimed at boys, excluding girls, has to resort to historically feminine virtues in order to formulate its normative ideal. Thirteen years earlier, in 1855, Spurgeon (1963) had preached on Psalm 127: 2 and pointed out the “Peculiar Sleep of the Beloved”. In this text, he praises bodily sleep as God’s gift to humankind. Sleep is a medicine and a reward for hard work. There are, however, pejorative senses of sleep as well: Carnal and slothful sleep, the sleep of lust, negligence or sorrow – for all of which Spurgeon blames men. The sleep God gives, by contrast, can be miraculous as Adam’s sleep was. It can be the consequence of a good conscience. Then there is the sleep of Christian contentment, the one of a quiet soul that does not have to disquiet itself about what the future may bring, the sleep of security, and finally the sleep of a happy death upon which the body sleeps but the soul wakes. To find out whether one belongs to the ‘beloved’, Spurgeon urges his audience to take three ‘tests’, one of doctrine, one of experience, and one of practice. Those that pass all of them are true Christians and will be rewarded by the sleep God gives.

### *The Sin of Sloth in the Discourses of Moral Theology*

As one of the Deadly Seven Sins, sloth has regularly appeared in the manuals of Roman Catholic moral theology. This type of writing illustrates the urge towards busyness, yet the right sort of busyness, obviously one very different from the “busy doing nothing” that is characteristic for the sin and that we have just encountered in the clerics who were in for papal rebuke. Also characteristic for the sin is the aversion against pursuing a profession seriously (e.g. Linsenmann, 1878: 179). Again, for this characteristic, Pope Innocent’s priests present a shining example, and they do so where the highest profession is concerned. In order to understand the extent to which sloth is disapproved of in treatises on moral theology, one has to take a look at the lavish praise bestowed on work in this theological context. Not only is there a “Duty of/to Work”, but:

“Work is life for the human being, *inactivity is death*. Humans do not work like animals do, only as much, for as long and with the purpose of catching prey and stilling one’s hunger, but they are born for work, like the bird is for flight” (Linsenmann, 1878: 286, transl. & italics AF).<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> “Arbeit ist dem Menschen Leben, Unthätigkeit ist Tod. Der Mensch arbeitet nicht wie das Tier bloß so viel und so lange und zu dem Ziele, bis die Beute errungen und der Hunger gestillt ist, sondern er ist zur Arbeit geboren, wie der Vogel zum Flug” (Linsenmann, 1878: 286).

This judgment is justified by a biblical reference to the gospel of John (5: 7) as well as by pointing out that work is a deserved and redeeming penance. Although this religious framework has a place for Sunday's rest, it positions itself strongly against rest as complete contrary of work. Interestingly, the reason given for this is that humans are mind/spiritful (*geistige*) beings. Of their bodily being there is nothing being said. Unsurprisingly then, there is no complete resting in the hereafter, either. Its inhabitants, we learn, do not sleep, nor do they forget. Their Sabbath is a continuous service to God in which work and enjoyment concur (Op. cit.: 287).

In a similar vein, Anton Koch's manual of moral theology finds strong words against sloth. The slothful sinner, often a pathological case, has an improper desire for rest and shows sleepiness (*Schläfrigkeit*) when he should be doing good works<sup>85</sup>. The interiorising and spiritualising tendencies we have traced in the history of 'sloth' stand out in this portrayal of sleepiness as inertia. They are most clearly expressed when the sin is referred to as a "detrimental sleep of the waking" (*ein schädlicher Schlaf der Wachenden*) (Koch, 1910: 165). Again, the gospel of work is preached here as well: The morality of the church is described as anti-quietist and prioritising deed, perfection and actuality over the rest of mere potentiality (Op. cit.: 234). For this argument, the wisdom literature of the Old Testament is quoted, particularly the model of the busy ant we have already encountered in Proverbs 6: 6 et seqq. Finally, work is honoured as collaboration with God for two reasons: First, human work appears as the collaboration of God's image in creation, second, it is praised as collaboration in and towards the kingdom of God (Op. cit.: 236).

As we have seen, harsh judgments have been passed on both sloth and its human embodiments. From contemporary self-help literature (including its ironic inversions as in Wasserstein's case; inversions that do not come across as any less self-help-orientated than their straightforward self-help counter-parts), back to the desert monks plagued by the demon of *Akedīa* through to the discourses of moral theology the message is loud and clear: The slothful human is a despicable creature. Positive, teleological assumptions about what being human means are at the root of this verdict, from the desert to our bookshelves. Different as they may be in terms of motivation, they converge in the practices they demand: Prayer and work – and self-restriction or even self-denial in matters of sleep. These practical demands have been especially voiced in the ascetic wake-up calls to which we are going to listen next.

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<sup>85</sup> This is also pointed out from a Jewish as well as a psychological perspective in Schimmel 1992. This book on the seven deadly sins integrates Jewish, Christian and therapeutic considerations. It shows "how Jew and Christian alike preached the virtue of zeal for the good and remonstrated those afflicted by spiritual apathy and despair. By becoming sensitized to the sin of sloth, we may be moved to lead lives of *hesed* (acts of loving-kindness) and *caritas* (love and charity). In so doing we shall find our lives invested with heightened meaning and purpose" (Schimmel, 1992: 216).

## 6 Monks, Puritans, and Others: Ascetic Wake-Up Calls

In this chapter a number of ascetic types, among which the monk and the Puritan are probably the most famous ones, are presented through the sleep disciplines they have endorsed. These types include, using the Weberian distinction, world-rejecting as well as inner-worldly orientations of asceticism for which its works represented a ‘cognitive reason’ of having been saved and which tended to reject irrational forms and contemplation. These as well as otherworldly orientation had been characteristic for monastic asceticism and its works as the ‘real reason’ of salvation, as Weber saw it (s. Chalcraft/Harrington 2001). While his distinctions may serve an analytical purpose, assuming them to constitute impermeable boundaries tends to obfuscate the continuities among discursive practices. More pertinent to our discussion is the orientation towards action in asceticism and its practical preference for acting as God’s tool rather than the intellectual option of contemplation (Schluchter, 1988: 85) with its strive to be a receptacle for the divine. Discussions of what constitutes asceticism pre-occupied Weber’s friends as well as his fierce critics, to whom he sometimes replied with self-righteous arrogance.<sup>86</sup> It is to be borne in mind that Christian tradition has developed the ancient idea of *askesis* as a self-transforming practice, which concerned Foucault, in a self-negating manner, for which practices of bodily deprivation and beliefs in the body’s depravity have been characteristic (Schmid, 2000: 263)<sup>87</sup>. The more broadly we apply the term, the more phenomena come to be grouped under it: The idea that all cultures are ascetic and have to grapple with desire, temptation, resistance and self-denial (Harpham 1987) is an example for such a broad application. By contrast, a Marxian position would hold that asceticism is equivalent to alienation and as such to be overcome, and an Engelsian view would allow for the possibility of a temporary need for asceticism on part of the working class in its struggle (Séguy 1977<sup>88</sup>).

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<sup>86</sup> The recent English-language edition of Weber’s anti-critiques, the replies to the critics of his essay on the *Protestant Ethic* is: Chalcraft/Harrington 2001.

<sup>87</sup> Wilhelm Schmid refers to Adolph von Harnack’s (1916) sketch of asceticism. Harnack saw in monastic Christianity the continuation of philosophical asceticism and distinguished four main streams: Old Testament sanctity, *askesis* as sacrifice of one’s life for a high ideal, the asceticism of ethical practice, and one of redemption that aimed at the new man.

<sup>88</sup> One drawback of Jean Séguy’s article is that it remains within highly formal terms, which are not fully made explicit, so that in the end one wonders what he means by asceticism and what not.

In the course of this chapter, we will first take a look at the sleep discipline/s developed in monastic circles. Monastic lifestyles can be broadly distinguished as anchoritic or eremitical and coenobitic or communal types, that is: individual and communal forms of living. Both types have tried to tame sleep in their own ways, with the anchoritic type – exemplified by the Stylites or pillar saints – probably being the more extreme form of the two overall. Several cases of female stylites were recorded; Peter Brown (1989: 332) mentions one, while Joyce Salisbury (1992: 4) refers to a hundred women living as stylites in a Syrian monastery in the ninth century. Nevertheless, the prototype of the pillar saint in religious imagination has been of male sex. Then we shall look at the monks living in community: How and why did they deprive themselves of sleep? What variations can be detected in their disciplinary practices? And what about nuns, who are often silently implied without being given a voice, and their sleep? From such supposedly other-worldly orientations we shall turn to those deemed inner-worldly: We shall explore the motives and motivations that ascetic Protestants stated for disciplining their dormant bodies. We shall start this paragraph by examining Puritan Richard Baxter's view of sleep. Minister to the weaver community of Kidderminster in the English West Midlands whose links to London he approved of, as he still saw the city as a pious space (s. Weber, 2005: 7: 49), he occupied a central position in Weber's *Protestant Ethic*, and restricting one's sleep was part of his ethical programme. Two other strands of ascetic Protestantism are brought into play through a Pietist and a Methodist voice of sleep-discipline to complete this chapter with an influential example from religious fiction in praise of wakefulness.

### *The Stylites' Lifestyle: Extreme Sleep Deprivation*

The pillar saint Simeon the Elder, who legendarily lived in mid-fifth century Syria, is one of the early eremitic figures to have sparked Christian imagination. The *Lives* (1992), proto-biographical legends, written about him present him to the believer as an exemplar of faith. Part of the legend is his (almost) complete sleeplessness with prayers throughout the nights. Keeping vigils was his favoured advice for the people who asked him for help and for whom he performed healing and preaching functions, all from his pillar about sixty feet in height. Why would someone choose to spend one's life standing on a pillar? As exotic as this ascetic life-style appears to us, it was not

without precedent at the time<sup>89</sup>. We have Lucian of Samosata's report on the cultic phalli of Dionysos in Hierapolis. These pillars were climbed twice a year, each by one man who stayed there for seven days in prayer. Lucian's account is revealing for our purposes, because it links the topic of the pillar with sleep deprivation already as far as this ancient Greek ritual practice is concerned. Thus, it is stated of the temporary occupant of the pillar:

"He never sleeps. If sleep ever does overtake him, a scorpion climbs up, wakes him and treats him unpleasantly [!]. This is the penalty imposed on him for sleeping. They tell holy and pious stories about the scorpion" (Lucian De Samosata, *De Dea Syria*, quoted after: Lives, 1992: 30).

The apocalyptic book of Enoch calls the heavenly court "those who do not sleep" (Op. cit.: 32 et seq.)<sup>90</sup>! Simeon is also said to have devised some wake-up mechanism that would abruptly put an end to his involuntary slumber during an early monastic phase in his life, before he went up onto the pillar. Legend also has him then sleeping on a bed covered with worms and not even slightly changing his bodily position during vigils. Once on the pillar, his humanity was doubted, because he was reputed to neither eat nor sleep, standing there day and night. A repeated loss of eyesight is the price God's athlete has to pay – yet this loss is made up for according to the Syriac version of his Life: "His eyes wasted away from lack of sleep, but his mind was enlightened with the vision of his Lord" (Op. cit.: 129). This sounds very much like an early formulation of body-mind dualism. As does the brief summary of Simeon's life as a stationary saint: "... he was standing at all times so that he would not give sleep to his eyes. There was no rest for his body, day or night, for fifty-six years" (178). Only when he approaches death, he sleeps, finally. His standing with arms outstretched has been interpreted as an imitation of the cross – an interpretation which, as Patricia Cox Miller (1994: 145 et seq.) rightly argues, makes the physical body in its material being disappear behind the imputed idea and thus overlooks the aspect of embodied performance. The performative aspect is also stressed by Susan Ashbrook Harvey (1998: 539), who concludes her article on *The Stylite's Liturgy* by highlighting its social and practical meanings:

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<sup>89</sup> If the pillar saints' practices were inspired by these pagan rituals has been a contested issue. Hübner (2003: 114), for example, argues against such a dependency and for the inspiration by biblical references, with the pillar as a stylised form of both the cross and the tree of life.

<sup>90</sup> *Akoimetes*, i.e. the sleepless ones, was also the name of a group of monks dating back to the late fourth and fifth century who believed in continuous prayer and tried to achieve this aim by taking turns in a never-ceasing performance of liturgy. The epithet is also used for the person of Alexander the Sleepless, Alexander Akoimetos, the heterodox ascetic who took his rigid life-style to the city of Constantinople but was expelled from there and settled on the Asian banks of the Bosporos (Hergemöller, 2002: 66).

“At Simeon's pillar, the poor and the powerless, the wealthy and influential, the clergyman, the bishop, the nun, the monk, the layperson all had a place of necessary value. This was so because the stylite exercised a ritual practice dependent upon mutually inclusive ascetic and liturgical meanings. We should not be surprised if the implications reverberated throughout the sociopolitical structures of Late Antiquity. The body was fashioned anew, and with it, human order as well.”

The case of Simeon was not an exception: The sleep-deprived body as a manifestation of religious athletics also figures in desert father Arsenios, who held that one hour of sleep was sufficient for those aspiring to this ideal (Markschies, 2004: 197; Hergemöller, 2002: 61).

Why this extreme form of sleep deprivation? Apart from some more general ideals about imitating the wakeful Christ, a sleep-specific motive is narrated by the Syriac Life of Simeon: God looks at the world and finds it “as if asleep” and in dire need of being awakened from “heavy torpor” (Lives, 1992: 180). The ascetic practice of self-imposed sleep discipline – or in this case rather: non-sleep discipline – re-translates the metaphorical wake-up call into physical, material waking. The (almost) never-sleeping saint on the pillar embodies the elimination of the ‘heavy torpor’ of ‘the world’. He was the holy man who was at the same time close and distant to the people, he was a professional, he allayed anxiety, and he served as consoler and judge. His rise was “the *leitmotif* of the religious revolution of Late Antiquity”, according to Peter Brown (1982a: 148), and therefore it is no coincidence that the holy man formed the subject-matter of one of Brown’s most well-known articles. In it, we are told that the holy man was to be found in Syria, the desert of which was milder than the Egyptian one and thus more conducive to develop a style different from living in the world. Those who did typically came from the higher strata of society and acted as powerful men, which is manifested by but not confined to their working miracles, cursing and exorcising, in a dramatic way. They wielded, as Brown (1982b: 162) puts it in another article “non-coercive power”. Their relations to those who sought their help were modelled after patronage, and the holy man acted as patron frequently ordering the affairs of a village. Sociologically speaking, he was ‘the stranger’ performing “a long drawn-out, solemn ritual of dissociation – of becoming the total stranger” (Brown 1982a: 131). This and its bodily, ‘athletic’ and material foundation put him in a unique position: “Perched on his column, nearer to the demons of the upper air than to human beings, Symeon was objectivity personified” (Op. cit.: 132). He mediated between God’s remoteness and closeness as the prototypical professional; he eased people’s anxiety and made decisions on behalf of the people. The male pronoun points beyond itself as “his rise was a victory of men over women, who had been the previous guardians of the diffuse occult traditions of their neighbourhood” (Op. cit.: 151). More recently, Peter Brown



(1998) has revised his view of the holy man. He now wants to see him less in 'splendid isolation' from other social types and take into account his subjective self-concept and relations with village churches and their representatives rather than only his social functions for his followers. Brown has also shown some sensitivity for gender issues leading him to question the maleness of Simon the Stylite due to his angelic qualities.<sup>91</sup>

Similar practices can be found in other cultural contexts, as Ruth Benedict's (1989: 243 et seq.) example from Zen training and her comparative as well as contrastive interpretation shows:

"He [the Zen fencer in training, sc. AF] is made to stand first on the level floor, concentrating on the few inches of surface which support his body. This tiny surface of standing room is gradually raised till he has learned to stand as easily on a four-foot pillar as in a court yard. When he is perfectly secure on that pillar, he 'knows'. His mind will no longer betray him by dizziness and fear of falling. This Japanese use of pillar-standing transforms the familiar Western medieval austerity of Saint Simeon Stylites into a purposeful self-discipline. It is no longer an austerity."

Revealing as Ruth Benedict's interpretation is for an understanding of Japanese self-discipline, it seems to fall short of the Stylite phenomenon. By constructing a dichotomy between austerity on one hand and purposeful self-discipline on the other, it neglects that the Stylite practice of austerity may itself have been directed towards a purpose. Performing in front of an audience is one such purpose, for which the gaze has practical significance (Miller 1994). The form of embodying redemption acts as an imitation of Christ through the elements of a dramatic show, in which the rationality of charismatic virtuoso religiosity is enacted (Drijvers 1985).

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<sup>91</sup> "If I spoke of holy *men* in my article, it was not solely because the Oxford of 1971 still lived, insouciantly, in the Jurassic age of gender studies - as was certainly the case. Holy males were the persons that I met in my sources; and I met them because, as holy men, they fulfilled a particular, highly public, even confrontational role, that women, whatever their reputation for sanctity, were rarely expected to occupy. But the exclusion of women from that particular, highly public and conflictual role is only half an answer. For maybe holy men were not 'men'. I would now wish to ask what light is cast on notions of male gender itself, in the early Byzantine world, by the conviction that a man such as Symeon, as an 'angelic' man, was not even a male? By living a life that mirrored the angels, the *demuta' de-mala'ke'* of Syrian piety, he had transcended the categories of gender as normally defined. I would suggest the working of an imaginative alchemy similar to that which thought of the desert monk as the wild man turned into the image of Adam. Symeon, the angelic man, was seen as a male turned so completely from the procreation that defined male gender in the normal world as to become, as an angel, an unfailing source of hyper-procreativity in the world around him. ... This 'socially constructed gender', of course, was the powerful and all-productive 'non-gender' of the mighty angels - beings thought of as capable of touching, without being soiled by such contact, all that was most concrete, most physical, most carnal in this world: the wombs of women, the growth of seeds, the multiplication of livestock, the life-giving, muddy flood of the Nile" (Brown, P., 1998: 271 et seq.).

### *Monastic Motives of Reducing Sleep*

Sleep discipline was not only practised in the solitude of the pillar, but also in the community of the cloister. According to the Coptic version of the Vita of Pachomios, renunciation of sleep or *Agrypnia*<sup>92</sup> was the first requirement mentioned for an ascetic life that Palamon set out to Pachomios, who was to become the founder of coenobitic monasticism. Pachomios himself was a moderate as far as the practice of fasting was concerned. Yet, the principal reason for this moderate view was that excessive fasting could easily get into the monks' ways of waking during vigils and thus of forgoing sleep. This reason is explained in Heinrich Bacht's (1977) article on monastic sleep in which he also points out several motives that have driven the monastic prizing of waking. The three most important ones are the ascetic motive, the daemonological motive (i.e. trying to prevent being visited by demons during sleep, and therefore doing without sleep as much as possible), and the motive of *Oratio continua*, permanent prayer. The motives of the Imitation of Christ and Parousia, Christ's return, have played a less prominent role, we are told by Bacht. In practice, Pachomios knew of three models of *Agrypnia*: Waking from evening until midnight, waking after midnight, and the alternating use of the first two models (s. Hergemöller, 2002: 59).

### *Disciplines of Barracks and Monastery*

Franz Borkenau's reflections on the historical development of the occident, posthumously published more than twenty years after his death in 1957, also mention Pachomios and his significance for turning from eremitism towards community life. Borkenau's early treatise is remarkable, because it already foreshadows the idea of discipline that has become such a crucial category in the social sciences ever since Foucault. Thus, writing of Pachomios, Borkenau remarks: "All he ever had learnt were the rules of barracks life, and no one who reads his monastic rule can avoid thinking of the discipline of the barracks" (Borkenau, 1984: 391; transl. AF). Pachomios' monks were not allowed to stretch out during sleep. They had to remain in a sitting position<sup>93</sup> with a rough cushion behind their backs. These monks perceived themselves as 'God's athletes', a self-concept that informed their ascetic practices, including sleep discipline (Ibd.: 393).

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<sup>92</sup> For a thorough treatment of the idea/l of *Agrypnia* and its philosophical roots see: Hergemöller, 2002: 49-95.

<sup>93</sup> This is also mentioned by Marksches (2004: 197) on the role of the body in ancient monasticism.

## *Variations to the Monastic Sleep Rule*

The classical and subsequently most widespread formulation of monastic, coenobitic discipline is found in Benedict's Rule. Although Benedict acknowledges the existence of anchorites, his rule is written for coenobites, whom he straightforwardly calls "the best of monks" (RSB, 1909: i). However, not all monastic communities have adhered to the standards advanced by Benedict's Rule. The Rule prescribed that the monks had to sleep in their full day-time clothing with their belts fastened. In his chapter on behaviour in the bedroom, Norbert Elias's *The Civilising Process*, first published in 1936, remarks on the historical variations to the rule of the Rule: The twelfth-century Cluniacensians were wealthy as well as powerful and loosened up the compulsion of asceticism. Their rule permitted undressed sleeping (at a time well before the invention of specific night garments). The reform order of Cistercians<sup>94</sup> on the other hand, trying to revert to the rigour of the Benedictine Rule, stuck to the full-clothes policy (Elias, 1997: I: 316). The import of Benedict's Rule and its effects and reception would be underplayed and consequently misunderstood, though, if only considered in terms of full-clothed or undressed sleeping habits. The sleep discipline it formulates is part and parcel of a more general monastic discipline, which had far-reaching implications.

This is so because in the prescriptions of the Rule we can already grasp the "Spirit of Scheduling" (Zerubavel 1980: 158) permeating our modern lives: "The Benedictine horarium ... has a unique significance as a 'historical first', since it most probably constituted *the* original model for all modern Western schedules." The text of the Rule conveys a firm sense of the necessity to structure the monks' days, a structure for which the performing of the Divine Office or Liturgy of the Hours is the hallmark. The regulations on when to go to sleep and when to rise constitute "an artificial temporal order on organic activities", as Zerubavel (Ibd.) puts it in a slightly cumbersome, sociologising manner.

The monks have been seen as the first representatives of methodical living (*methodische Lebensführung*), for Weber they were the first professionals, "vocational men" (*Berufsmenschen*). And, to add a Foucauldian twist to this, they used both the

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<sup>94</sup> Lutz Kaelber describes the Cistercians as an engine for monastic change: "In the twelfth century, the Cistercians were at the forefront of monastic reforms, and they superseded the Benedictines in representing religious life's 'most spectacular success' at the time. The Cistercians' spiritual program echoed strong religious sentiments in larger society, stressing simplicity, poverty, manual labor and charity, to be achieved by rejecting worldly entanglements and restoring a strict, literal adherence of the Rule of St. Benedict. The appeal of this spiritual program is attested by the growth of the Cistercians, who within one hundred and fifty years expanded from the two dozen monks of Robert of Molesme's 'new monastery', founded in 1098 under the charismatic Bernard of Clairvaux and other capable leaders, to an organization with perhaps over twenty thousand members by the mid-thirteenth century" (Kaelber, 1998: 75).

disciplinary model and techniques of the self; the Benedictines did so and later the Jesuits, who practised a ‘rationalised asceticism’ (Schluchter, 1988: 83), not least of all through the type of boarding-school education they have instituted.

Before delving into the sleep rules of the Benedictine Rule, let us try to weave a more systematic thread about monastic discipline, in order to be able to grasp the sleep regulations of the rule as a part of sleep discipline, and in turn this sleep discipline as part of a broader monastic discipline. For this, I will draw on a study by sociologists Hubert Treiber and Heinz Steinert: *Die Fabrikation des zuverlässigen Menschen: Über die ‘Wahlverwandtschaft’ von Kloster- und Fabrikdisziplin*. Treiber and Steinert (2005: 61) conceptualise the monastery as a “laboratory for efficient and useful techniques of disciplining”. They draw on Foucault, but – seeing him to be standing on his head – they try “to put him back on his feet” [like Marx did with Hegel, as the implicit allusion seems to have it]. This endeavour consists in describing and analysing the rationalisation of discipline – not, however, by rooting it in the Benthamite thought of the Panopticon, but by examining the concrete, historical structures of monastic discipline. For Treiber and Steinert the Benedictine Rule manifests a process of institutionalisation enforcing obedience (seen in parallel to Weber’s concept of rule). In this they see a ‘qualitative leap’ from anchoritism and the condition for further rationalisation. They stress the monastic demand of perpetual wakefulness and book-keeping of the soul. The rule constitutes the monastery as a “knowledge apparatus” (*Wissensapparat*, 74 et passim). They manage to blend in an analysis of continuity with one of discontinuity:

“Within a feudal mode of production, built on subsistence economy, deprivation and direct force/violence, the methodical living could not have been generalised, in spite of the advantages it brought along. Yet, the model institution of disciplinary society was thus created and able to pass on itself” (Treiber/Steinert, 2005: 86).

### *The Rule of Discipline: The Discipline of the Rule*

Another helpful attempt at thinking systematically about discipline and the Rule is found in Talal Asad (1993). There the anthropologist of religion emphasises that the disciplinary practices of monasticism were not geared towards factual obedience plain and simple, but to creating the *will* to obey in the monks. The ‘disciplina’ used to achieve this end had martial, political and domestic meanings in classical Latin. Apart from that, it was “the common term for legally prescribed flogging” (Ibd.: 161). Different meanings of ‘discipline’ can also be detected in Saint Benedict’s work:

"The *Rule* employs the word *disciplina* in several senses: in the sense of good order, which the *Rule* should create in the monastery, of the *Rule* itself, and of the form of proper conduct, including internal and external attitudes. But most often, the word refers to all the penalties and corrections specified ... In the *Rule*, discipline therefore connotes (a) divinely derived and divinely oriented knowledge, which is embodied in (b) physical and spiritual practice within (c) an organized community and under (d) the absolute authority of an abbot, whose duty is to apply (e) measures necessary for the attainment of Christian virtues (divine knowledge embodied in human practice" (Asad, 1993: 137).

Furthermore and more generally, we can say that the Rule served as "a strong normative basis" for medieval monasticism's "other-worldly asceticism" (Kaelber, 1998: 227 et seq.). But what does it have to say about sleep? The Rule translates the metaphorical appeal to rise from sleep into actual sleeping arrangements. The negative commandment "Not to be given to sleep" (RSB, 1909: 19), which figures as number 37 in the Rule's list of "instruments of good works" refers to the injunction of Proverbs 20: 13 we have encountered already in chapter 4 of this study. Number 38 of the Rule forbids slothfulness, which we have dealt with in chapter 5, that is the preceding one.

Benedict's sleep discipline is not as burdensome as the anchorites' extremes. He even cares for his monks' physical condition: When they get up shortly after midnight for prayer, they should feel refreshed from the sleep they had (up until then that is) (Rule, 1909: viii: 36). Sleep times vary with the seasons. One chapter of the Rule, the twenty-second one, is specifically devoted to "How the Monks are to sleep":

"All shall sleep in separate beds and each shall receive, according to the appointment of his abbot, bedclothes, fitted to the condition of his life. If it be possible let them all sleep in a common dormitory, but if their great number will not allow this they may sleep in tens or twenties, with seniors to have care of them. Let a candle be constantly burning in the room until morning, and let the monks sleep clothed and girt with girdles or cords; but they are not to have knives by their sides in their beds, lest perchance they be injured whilst sleeping. In this way the monks shall always be ready to rise quickly when the signal is given and hasten each one to come before his brother to the Divine Office, and yet with all gravity and modesty. The younger brethren are not to have their beds next to each other, but amongst those of the elders. When they rise for the Divine Office let them gently encourage one another, because of the excuses made by those that are drowsy" (RSB, 1909: 53 et seq.).

The details of this chapter convey the impression that the 'methodical leading of a life' (*methodische Lebensführung*) would not only be practised where the Rule was followed, but that the Rule itself is a manifestation of this methodical spirit. This spirit requires readiness even in sleep; sleep is directed towards the alertness of the liturgy of hours.

Even in sleep, the monk has to exert self-control, especially sexually, and sleeping in clothes is intended to support appropriate behaviour and avoid bodily self-exploration (Wittmer-Butsch, 1990: 35). Of particular interest for the purposes of this study is the ending of this chapter: Moderation is required in the process of waking and getting up, *because of* the excuses made by the drowsy ones, who are still given to sleep – and also not to give them any excuses for staying in that somnolent state. No excuse to the sleepy ones! It is probably not without significance that the Rule’s chapter on how to sleep ends on a note exhorting to the regaining of vigilance<sup>95</sup>. Searching the whole monastery for sleeping fellow monks used to be an assigned task in accordance with monastic statutes (Wittmer-Butsch, 1990: 76, fn. 145).

The aspect of moderation has been taken up by a prominent commentator on the rule, the mystic Hildegard of Bingen. She held that Benedict had aimed at a reasonable middle ground, for immoderation in both waking and sleeping would do harm to body and soul alike (s. Lauer, 1998: 157). Hildegard interpreted the injunction to sleep in clothes as a rule to prevent nakedness. The girdle serves the same purpose: It keeps the dress from changing its position and thus from making one appear as if one was naked. She argues against sleep after vigils and promotes doing something useful instead (Zátonyi 2003). In her view of sleep, which we have briefly scrutinised as an anthropological wake-up call, she combined traditional beliefs in demons, which she still saw as causing nightmares, with bodily influences.<sup>96</sup>

Another way of dealing with Benedict’s rule is Richard Fox’s sixteenth-century translation of the Rule for nuns. It has “mynchyn”, the female of ‘monk’, but except for that comes quite close to the original version. In this translation we also read about the continually burning candle, the clothed and girdled appearance of the sleepers without their knives, and the mixing of older and younger – here: – sisters’ beds in the dormitory. Particular attention is drawn in Fox’s text to the process of waking and getting up:

“they that be furste vp and redy toward the seruyce of God Shall make som softe and sobre styrrynge / with the sounde of their mouthes / or of their fete / or knockynge vppo ~ the beddes sides / to a wake theym that be sluggards” (Collett, 2002: 121).

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<sup>95</sup> The regaining of vigilance through early rising was directed against temptations one might succumb to in a semi-conscious state; on this and other aspects of medieval sleep, see: Wittmer-Butsch 1990.

<sup>96</sup> For a summary of Hildegard’s theory of sleep as well as of Albert the Great’s (1193?-1280) studies based on Aristotle and defining sleep as being deprived of action, see: Wittmer-Butsch, 1990: 52; 57; 83; 59.

In addition to the liturgical prayers, the daily activities consist of manual labour and reading. The monks (and later nuns, too) are constantly kept busy in this way, for as Benedict warns: “Idleness<sup>97</sup> is an enemy of the soul” (Rule, 1909: xlviii: 84), a sentence often quoted. In spite of all good efforts, the writer and readers of the Rule stand in awe and shame before the spiritual accomplishments of the Fathers. They are virtuous examples: “But to us who are slothful, and lead bad and negligent lives, they are matter for shame and confusion” (Op. cit.: lxxiii: 124). The message of humility, so central to the spirit of the Rule, is reiterated here and enacted by a writer who includes himself as unworthy and his “little Rule written for beginners” (Ibd.).

Let us go back to the nuns, introduced by Fox’s translation of Benedict’s rule for the female religious. In Suzanne Campbell-Jones’s anthropological study of English nuns, which also discusses the change from dormitory to cell<sup>98</sup> accommodation in one case, she observed that:

“The nuns were expected to go to sleep as quickly as possible. Sleep was the natural image of death. In death the nun would hope to be united with the God for whom she worked so hard. Sleep was a reward for a day spent working, a time for the body to rest before giving itself for yet another day” (Campbell-Jones, 1979: 101).

Dealing with nineteenth century French nuns, Odile Arnold finds the – as we have seen Rule-based – insistence on individual beds and bedding astonishing, particularly in view of the common practice of bed-sharing in the outside world. Moral and hygienic reasons have led to the monastic individualisation of bed and bedding, which also indicates the wealth of the nunneries (Arnold, 1984: 49 et seq.). Arnold’s nuns also knew about sleep as death, but in their lives this image is enveloped in a much more negative view than Campbell-Jones’s sleep as reward. Here, vigilance is needed to ward off temptations, practices to “éviter de réveiller l’hydre endormie” (Op. cit.: 154), and reducing sleep as much as possible. Dormitories have tended to occupy different places in male and female monasteries. This interesting observation is made in Roberta Gilchrist’s spatial analysis. According to this analysis, a religious women’s dormitory tends to be in the least accessible place of the nunnery, whereas a monks’ dormitory would usually be located in a more shallow space. The nuns’ sleep was thus, we might say, a more segregated affair than the monks’ sleep. This conclusion is in line with

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<sup>97</sup> The history of condemnations of idleness would warrant a study of its own; to just refer to another example: “‘Only idleness dishonours’, wrote Pierre Foisac in 1863 ... despite sleep’s ‘value as a gift of nature’, it was ‘nevertheless an enormous waste of time, and the principal obstacle to the study of the sciences and to the achievement of works in a life ... already too short’” (Summers-Bremner, 2008: 100).

<sup>98</sup> Only two centuries earlier a papal decree had ordered the Cistercians to get rid of their cells and return to the communal custom (Wittmer-Butsch, 1990: 36).

Gilchrist's more general statement: "In nunneries, emphasis was on the construction of gender identity through the strict enclosure of the nuns" (Gilchrist, 1994: 166).

In some cases bedding and related accessories became luxury items, a development against which the reforms of Cluny upheld the vow of monastic poverty. In applying the rule and its sleep rules, regional differences emerged. North of the Alps, monks tended to cover themselves with furs due to the cooler climate they lived in, and they went for some more sleep between the prayer services of vigil and laudes. This practice spread widely, with the exception of the stricter Cartusians and Cistercians (Wittmer-Butsch, 1990: 33; 41).

### *Sleep according to the Master's Rule*

While Benedict's monks interrupt their sleep for prayer, another influential Rule of approximately the same time but probably of an earlier date, the *Regula Magistri*, has them observe a night-long vigil on Sundays. Literary dependencies among these two Rules, Benedict's and the Master's, have been a matter of dispute. However, in recent years, research has been in favour of the historical priority of the Master's Rule and of Benedict's heavy reliance on the earlier rule (Guevin, 1999: 3). Benedict's text appears to be more lenient towards his monks' sleep needs and does without the "observance primitive" (de Vogüé, 1964: i: 46) of the all-night prayer. Similarly, an issue of concern for the Master's monks is absent in Benedict's Rule: the struggle against nocturnal "pollutions"<sup>99</sup> and against sleep itself (Op. cit.: i: 101). In the question of pollutions we find a crystallisation of "the monastic tradition's perception of the bed as a zone of danger, implicit in the Benedictine rule" (Elliott, 1999: 31). Pollutions have not been an exclusively Christian concern, though: Buddhists, for instance, argued about the moral significance of night-time pollutions for lack of self-control to the point of a schism in the fifth century CE (Flanagan, 2000: 179). The Master's monk who has

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<sup>99</sup> The question of nocturnal pollutions is discussed with reference to Cassian in a late text by Foucault, who from this goes on to make the connection to the ascetic appeal to vigilance: "For his part man must do no less than keep ceaseless watch over his thoughts and bodily movements day and night – during the night for the benefit of the day and during the day in thinking of the approaching night ... This vigilance means exerting the sort of 'discrimination' that lies at the heart of the self-analysis developed in active spirituality. The work of the miller sorting out his grain, the centurion picking his troops, the money changer who weighs coins before accepting or refusing them – this is how the monk must unceasingly treat his own thoughts, so as to identify those that may bring temptation" (quoted after: Carrette, 1999: 195). For the different perspectives on nocturnal emissions in early Christianity see Brakke 1995, who informs us that "Christians held every conceivable position: some believed that such emissions were always defiling, others that they were never so, and still others that some emissions were defiling and some not" (Op. cit.: 421). For Aquinas, for example, the culpability depended on the cause of a pollution in question, with not so much the consequence but prior illegitimate thoughts as culprits (Manzanedo 1997). See also: Elliott 1999.



become “impure” during sleep has to kneel in front of the abbot and confess his failure. He is then questioned by the abbot whether he had had any “obscene” thoughts during the prior day, thoughts that might have led to the “consensus libidinis” during the night (Op. cit.: i: 328 et seq.). It seems as if the Freudian concept of *Tagesrest* was anticipated in these disciplinary regulations. Yet, the Master’s monk does not have any notion of an unconscious to resort to. He will have to abstain from holy communion for two days – provided no further “consensus libidinis” occurs during those nights, as is implicitly understood. Biblical authority is invoked for the verdict that perverse thoughts separate from God – a clear warning to the monks.<sup>100</sup>

The Master’s Rule envisages the beds in a circular order, with the abbot’s bed at the centre. Brothers who choose to follow the spirit rather than the flesh will be easily recognisable to the abbot and the others in this arrangement, as the rule indeed makes explicit. An oil lamp is lit before the monks go to sleep and switched off when all are in their beds in case of an oil shortage in the monastery (Op. cit.: ii: xxviii: 161 et seq.). Interestingly, the Master’s monks have an extra tunic to wear during sleep. The waking-up process is described in detail, as the Master’s rule is generally quite detailed, which has led to its being accused of pedantry. Two brothers are assigned the task of waking up the others for prayer during the night, in case one of them falls asleep. Accomplishing this task yields a rich reward from God, according to the Master’s rule. The two brothers have to wake up the abbot first by shaking his feet and, upon his awakening, saying thanks to God. The abbot then goes to the oratory and prays, while waiting for all the brothers to arrive. Those who do not make it are likened to bees who have missed the sweetness of the ‘divine honeycomb’ and who produce only wax of the flesh. The fire of hell, the brothers are warned, will burn this wax.

Utility is at the heart of some further sleeping arrangements: In summer, the brothers wear wooden shoes in order not to soil their bedding. In winter, they have fur socks in order to avoid getting cold feet. In winter, their beds have a pad, a blanket and a woollen rug, in summer a sheet. There are also supposed to be animal skins by the beds to wipe one’s feet before going to bed.

The Master’s as well as Benedict’s Rule has been rediscovered by Wiedemann (2003) in his attempt to find out about the historical practice of the siesta. While his main concern is the Roman siesta, he thinks the two rules shed some light on the earlier customs:

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<sup>100</sup> Other monastic rules know of more detailed proceedings. The *Consuetudines* of the canonry at Klosterrath near Aachen, for instance, have a chapter “On Pollutions and the Changing of [under]pants” (*Consuetudines*, 1993: 9: 156-161).

“While these two texts are separated from the age of Cicero by many centuries as well as by Christian idealism, large sections of them consist of instructions about household management similar in kind to that found in the agricultural handbooks of Cato, Varro and Columella (which medieval ecclesiastical landlords found so useful), and likely to reflect traditional practice of man-management. The *Rule of the Master* enjoins all to sleep at the sixth hour in summer, in Lent, and after recuperating from an illness, giving the explanation that when the nights are shorter, this will make it easier for the monks to get up to pray. The Benedictine Rule specifies the summer as lasting from Easter to the Autumn equinox; during this period members of the monastic household should take a siesta or apply themselves to silent reading, but not in winter” (Wiedemann, 2003: 138).

Benedict’s Rule, Richard Fox’s English translation, and the Master’s Rule all prescribe general silence after the night prayer of compline. The last one prohibits eating and drinking even of water after compline under punishment of excommunication, which lasts until he has repented and promised to correct his erring ways (Op. cit.: ii: xxviii: 168 et seq.). While there are variations to the monastic sleep rule, sleep discipline is a shared trait of monastic rules more generally. Some, of course, whether bound by monastic Rule or not, aspired to excelling beyond what the rules required:

“The Prussian mystic Dorothea of Montau performed heroic nocturnal feats in the interests of sanctity, spending sleepless nights ‘shuffling about on her knees, crawling, arching her body in the air with her forehead and feet on the floor ... falling on her face with her hands behind her back as if they were bound, and so forth’. Pope Urban V habitually stayed awake to pray at night, while St Catherine of Siena ‘eventually slept no more than half an hour every other day’. Fourteenth-century saints strove to make their beds as uncomfortable as possible when they did have to sleep. Lights were kept burning in the dormitories of monks, who were not allowed to sleep alone lest the Devil tempt them to sinful thoughts and actions” (Summers-Bremner, 2008: 39 et seq.)

### *Sleep in Ascetic Protestant Timing*

Both Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism require the disciplining of dormant bodies – a fact that makes both ascetic Protestants and Max Weber’s interpretation of them suitable candidates for pondering religious sleep discipline and its potentially unintended, potentially non-religious consequences. The struggle against sleep – or what was seen as too much of it – was fought with acrimony by ascetic Protestants. Sloth and idleness were long known, to be sure, yet they became particularly unacceptable for a world-view in which one actively sought to reassure oneself of one’s salvation. ‘Inner-worldly asceticism’ is the Weberian catchword denoting this world-view and the practices it engendered – in contra-distinction to the otherworldly sort of

the monastics, while both shared a productive asceticism. While monastic Catholicism was still enthralled by magic in the form of sacramental salvation, this type of Protestantism succeeded in taking up and continuing the process of disenchanting the world.

Richard Baxter is one of Weber's key witnesses for the case of ascetic Protestant ethics<sup>101</sup> by his having shown a practical and realistic orientation and influenced a wide readership (Weber, 1992: 155 et seq.; Weber, 2002a: 103 et seq.). Robert Merton (1970) famously laid out the Puritan interest as finding proof of one's own chosenness, extending domination over nature and glorifying God as a service to oneself, to society and to God, respectively. Merton followed Weber in choosing Baxter, whom he takes to have been one of the most representative figures. Weber's, reading of Baxter illustrates how a call to action is directed towards the redeeming of time, and how whatever stands in the way of this redeeming activity is negated:

"Not leisure and enjoyment, but only activity serves to increase the glory of God, according to the definite manifestations of His will. Waste of time is thus the first and in principle the deadliest of sins. The span of human life is infinitely short and precious to make sure of one's own election. Loss of time through sociability, idle talk, luxury, even more sleep than is necessary for health, six to at most eight hours, is worthy of absolute moral condemnation" (Weber, 1992: 157 et seq.).<sup>102</sup>

Although he is critical of Weber's argument on the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism due to its neglect of economic factors, non-religious ideological factors and its generalisation about Puritanism, Tawney (1990) also recognises the religious urge towards action and labour. We will return to Weber's summary of Baxter's teachings in a moment. Before doing so, however, I want to bring in a more recent interpretation of both Puritan and capitalist ideas on timing. I think this is helpful, because sleep – as something that needs to be timed – emerges differently depending on how one

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<sup>101</sup> Weber's choice of Baxter has been criticised on the grounds that the latter was not a full predestinarian. For this debate, the minutiae of which cannot be spelt out in this paper, see the contributions in: Lehmann/Roth 1995. On two of these contributions, Malcom H. MacKinnon's argument that the Westminster Confession, contra Weber, actually ameliorated Puritan anxiety and that Baxter was concerned with spiritual, as distinct from temporal calling, and David Zaret's counter-critique, see: Whimster, 2007: 65-67. While some of them may challenge certain Weberian assumptions about the motivational triggers of Puritan ethics, they do not change the material contents of Baxter's position on sleep.

<sup>102</sup> The reader may want to consult Kalberg's new translation (Weber, 2002a: 105) of this paragraph, although for our concern here it does not change much.

relates Protestant ethic and spirit of capitalism. The historical role of Puritanism is defined by E.P. Thompson as such:

“Puritanism, in its marriage of convenience with industrial capitalism, was the agent which converted men [!] to new valuations of time; which taught children even in their infancy to improve each shining hour; and which saturated men’s [!] minds with the equation, time is money” (Thompson, 1967: 95).

Compared to Weber’s balanced argument, this interpretation conflates the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, maybe too easily. This critical remark is not meant to detract anything from the value of Thompson’s work as a whole and his contribution to social history; especially not from his role in taking seriously the historical experience of the working class and his treatment of Methodism in *The Making of the English Working Class* (Thompson, E., 1991), originally published four years prior to his article on time discipline.

Still, what I would like to maintain *contra* Thompson (1967), is the distinction between the two, the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism. This distinction was pointed out by Weber immediately after his account of Baxter’s “absolute moral condemnation”. In Baxter’s (and his like-minded ascetic Protestants’ more generally) case: “It does *not yet* hold, with Franklin, that time is money...” (Weber, 1992: 158). However, Weber at once qualifies his statement in the very same sentence: “... but the proposition is true in a certain spiritual sense. It [time] is infinitely valuable because every hour lost is lost to labour for the glory of God” (Ibd.).<sup>103</sup> Sleeping hours are all lost hours and therefore in for rebuke. On this the representatives of both Protestant ethic and spirit of capitalism will agree, however, the intended purposes of self-inflicted sleep-deprivation do differ. At the same time, both models function in terms of utility, following means-end rationality.<sup>104</sup>

Utility through vigilance had been important also to Catholic bankers and businessmen, such as fifteenth century Florentine Alberti<sup>105</sup>, who intended to avoid

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<sup>103</sup> Or, according to Kalberg’s translation: “Franklin’s maxim – ‘time is money’ – is not yet expressed by Baxter, yet this axiom holds in a certain spiritual sense” (Weber, 2002a: 105).

<sup>104</sup> The contribution of Protestantism to rationalisation and disenchantment has been called into question, e.g. lately by Rublack (2005), who discovers “a Protestant ‘super-enchantment’ of the early modern world until c. 1650” (Op. cit. 10 et seq.) as well as a “new spiritual aesthetics” (Op. cit.: 193). Eye-opening as this is, her leitmotif of the significance of clocks and calendars seems to point in the direction of rationalisation. At the end of the day, of course, all depends on how this contentious term is used.

<sup>105</sup> The question whether Alberti’s was a direct precursor to the ascetic Protestant Ethic or not has been debated by Sombart, who held that it was, and Weber, who thought that it was not and that, being a form

‘sleep and sloth’, as well as Franciscan Luca Pacioli, a formative influence on the development of double-entry book-keeping. In Pacioli’s mind, wakefulness was a business virtue: The successful entrepreneur has a hundred eyes to oversee his business, his record-keeping ensures his vigilance, and he is “alert as the rooster who keeps nightly vigils in all seasons without rest” (Aho, 2005: 37). Alberti, Pacioli, and Baxter are not worlds apart in matters of vigilance. In Baxter’s tracts, the old sin of sloth is transformed into the sin of wasting time; not only is it one sin among many (or seven, thinking of the so-called deadly sins), but it is the worst of those. Labour is preached, not least of all, to ward off temptations, especially sexual ones. The temptation of sloth, however, is not to be underestimated. For those guilty of this sin, there is not much to expect from life (neither here, nor there). Baxter’s casuistry book answered questions pressing his congregation and was judged to be “a typical presentation of the leading elements in the Puritan ethos” (Merton, 1970: 60). While recent research has cast some doubt on this general statement with a view to the doctrine of predestination and Baxter’s position on it, in his condemnation of excessive sleep he does not differ from his contemporaries: The divinely created cosmos makes the sluggard feel the consequences of his non-doing, as is explained in the “Directions for the Poor” given by *A Christian Directory*. This tract was directed at ministers and family fathers of all sorts of different professions. “It is, in essence, a Puritan *Summa Theologica* and *Summa Moralis* in one; its method of treatment descends directly from that of the medieval *Summae*, and it is, perhaps, the last important English specimen of a famous *genous*” (Tawney, 1990: 219).

Richard Baxter (1925: 41) had some strong words against sloth, too: “Slothfulness and idleness is a sin that naturally tendeth to want; and God hath cursed it to be punished with poverty”. With a stronger normative impetus and using the idea of the calling, that was so central for Weber, the “Directions against Theft and Fraud” dictate: “Live not in idleness or sloth, but be laborious in your Callings that you may escape that need or poverty which is the temptation to this sin of theft. Idleness is a crime which is not to be tolerated in Christian Societies” (Op. cit.: 64). Those who do not want to work thereby show they are lacking in God’s grace. Paul’s scriptural admonition “If a man will not work he shall not eat” (2 Thess 3: 10) is repeatedly quoted. This does not mean, on the other hand, that wealth is defended; warnings against the Mammon

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of secular humanism, it lacked the persuasive force of a religious world-view. On this and the exchange with Felix Rachfahl, see: Chalcraft 2005.

abound in Baxter's writings. Unintentionally, however, ascetic practices gave rise to economic rationalism and its material outcomes. And it is in the context of such unintended consequences of action, that Baxter reappears at the end of the essay on the Protestant Ethic:

"In Baxter's view the care for external goods should only lie on the shoulders of the 'saint like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment'. But fate decreed that the cloak should become an iron cage" (Weber, 1992: 181).<sup>106</sup>

There is almost a sense of nostalgia for a bygone religious era in these words, written by self-confessed "religiously unmusical" Weber. Back to the Protestants in question themselves: Not all sorts of ascetic practices were equally welcome to them. Baxter, for example, could not make much of vigils in the middle of night and argued that it was "a foppery and abuse of God and ourselves, to think that the breaking of our sleep is a thing that itself pleases God" (quoted after Ekirch 2006: 302 et seq.). Baxter's verdict, however, ought not to be misread as a defence of sleep. As we have seen, the sleeper had to be cautious not to waste time in bed. In addition to the anti-catholic resentment that shines through in the condemnation of vigils, a negative reason, there is also a positive one: the urge towards action. And nightly contemplations did not exactly match the ideal of rightful and pious action, which was required, at least not Baxter's. It has been suggested, however, that many of his contemporaries begged to differ and thought that the mid-night hour was the best time for prayer (see Ekirch, 2006: 303). Much better was it according to Baxter and particularly for the poor, to rise half-an-hour early in the morning for prayer and then meditate during work. With the latter, a highly functional solution had been found. Yet, this practice was already known to the Pachomian monks of the fourth century, who wove mats and said monotonous, repetitive prayers at the same time – a practice called "mental mat-weaving" (*geistiges Mattenflechten*) by church historian Hans Lietzmann, who sees this form of mechanised prayer as an effort of will to fight tiredness (see: Treiber/Steinert, 2005: 67 et seq.). If the fight is won in this way, both God – in case of the monastics – and the employer – in case of the working poor under ascetic Protestant guidance – will be happy. The monks at times and the poor more generally may be less so. Immediately

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<sup>106</sup> The 'iron cage' has become almost proverbial in English. Kalberg's translation (Weber, 2002a: 123) comes closer to the original German version of Weber's [1920] text: "According to Baxter, the concern for material goods should lie upon the shoulders of his saints like 'a lightweight coat that could be thrown off at any time.' Yet fate allowed a steel-hard casing (*stahlhartes Gehäuse*) to be forged from this coat."

after his advice on how they are to ‘redeem time’ in their lifetime, Baxter goes on to give another commandment to the poor: “Be willing to dye. Seeing the world giveth you so cold entertainment, be the more content to let it go, when God shall call you: For what is here to detain your hearts?” (Baxter, 1925: 48).

The practice of inner-worldly asceticism went beyond the writing of moral treatises and unleashed productive as well as inventive energies. One factor in the productivity of different economic developments in denominationally defined Western European countries has been made out in different calendars. In Protestant countries, the number of religious holidays was reduced, and thus more time available for work, which meant an increased supply of labour. In Catholic countries, by contrast, the holidays were either turned more Christian and away from secular enjoyment or their number was even increased. Based on these findings, it has been concluded that “whether ascetic Protestants actually worked harder than other early moderners – and there is much to suggest that they did – there are certainly good reasons that they worked more hours per year” (Gorski, 2005: 177). It is Philip Gorski’s (2003: xvi) merit to have alerted us to the history of what he terms ‘the disciplinary revolution’ and the role it has played in the development of the modern state:

“What steam did for the modern economy, I claim, discipline did for the modern polity: by creating more obedient and industrious subjects with less coercion and violence, discipline dramatically increased, not only the regulatory power of the state, but its extractive and coercive capacities as well”.

As for inventive energies, anxiety towards salvation and its motive of Redeeming Time were translated into ‘Redeeming *more* time’. This translation is itself an act of rationalisation: Quantifying, measuring and calculating time were thus of utmost concern to both this specific religious ethic and the famous spirit of capitalism. The purpose of redeeming more time inspired the English Puritan Ralph Thoresby. He regretted how much ‘precious time’ had already been spent asleep and believed in getting up by five-o’clock in the morning. Therefore, in 1680, he devised an early alarm clock (Ekirch, 2006: 264). The alarm clock as an externalisation and objectivation – to use Berger/Luckmann terms – of time-redeeming efforts formed the material counterpart to the internalisation of time discipline, an internalisation E. P. Thompson has pointed out. Arguing that there was nothing new in the prising of industry and the disdain for idleness, he nevertheless sees “a new insistence, a firmer accent”

(Thompson, 1967: 87) at work in moralist preaching. Once again, the author of the *Christian Directory* is summoned as a key witness: “Baxter and his fellows were offering to each man his own interior moral time-piece” (Ibd). The reference Thompson cites to back up his claim, however, seems to suggest much more of a mechanistic ideal, perhaps as a timely successor to the metaphoric reference to organisms. If, due to this metaphoricity, each had to function as an organ to the whole, now everyone had to serve as part of a clock or engine.<sup>107</sup> This implied a move to precision, reliability and tirelessness. Whether we think of the Protestant ethic as of an “unholy alliance or elective affinity” (Williams, S., 2005: 50) or as of a “marriage of convenience” (Thompson, E. 1967: 95), one of its ‘casualties’ was, as Williams suggests, sleep.

Besides Calvinism, Methodism and Anabaptism, Weber classified Pietism as a form of ascetic Protestantism. Treiber and Steinert (2005) have identified several institutions bridging the disciplines of monastery and secular institutions. One of these bridging institutions is the Pietist orphanage in Halle the pedagogy of which was orientated towards achieving the *methodische Lebensführung* through work. Pietist inner-worldly asceticism, according to Treiber/Steinert, points back to the other-worldly asceticism that we have encountered in monasticism. Both forms were promoted by a spiritual aristocracy, in the case of Pietism as social type of a sect, for which one has to qualify oneself in order to gain and maintain admission. The regulations A. H. Francke laid down for his orphanage in 1885 reflect the methodical spirit. Educators as well as children have to get up early in the morning. The woman in charge of the orphan girls has to be up shortly after five o’clock, wake up the children, help them dress and wash – all in order to be ready for the morning prayer starting at six. They are put to bed at nine o’clock at night, after the evening prayer, and her guardian has to stay with them and watch over their beds. Particular attention is drawn to the fire, and the dangers it may present to the children, who are therefore not allowed to carry around any lights. Their guardian is supposed to take a look at the fire and shut the door of the oven before night time (Francke, 1966: 159). The instructions given for a pedagogical praeceptor are more detailed still. Here, on a Sunday the children have to make their beds immediately upon getting up. Every day the praeceptor has to see to it that none of the children stays in bed. What clothes they are allowed to bring into the dormitory at night is also prescribed. The inspector walks

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<sup>107</sup> This is the passage in Baxter’s *Christian Directory* as quoted by Thompson: “A wise and well skilled Christian should bring his matters into such order, that every ordinary duty should know his place, and all should be ... as the parts of a Clock or other Engine, which must be all conjunct, and each right placed” (Thompson, E., 1967: 87).



around the room, watching the children, taking care of the lights and preventing two from sharing the same bed (Op. cit.: 178 et seq.). The students get up at five in the morning, and then pray and read the bible for an hour, thereupon they start learning Greek, Hebrew or French. They are permitted to stay up until ten at night and sometimes also to watch the night sky for astronomical insights (Op. cit.: 232 et seq.). Moderation is Francke's advice for students of theology, a moderation not cultivated by some Pietist circles. Certain communities reduced their sleep intake to only a few hours per night, since they believed that thus the chances that Christ would find them awake upon his return were increased. The Ephrata Solitary, a community of celibates in a Pennsylvanian commune kept watch in order to wait for Christ's return, an old motif found already in the second-century Barnabas letter (Hergemöller, 2002: 50). Yet, Francke's aspiring theologians are told to let the day be day and the night be night; to manage their time in such a way that work is enjoyed from the morning on, but also to give rest to the body for the sake of one's health (Francke, 1966: 406). On a metaphorical, moralist level, however, sleep is treated less leniently: Satan, as Francke (Op. cit.: 422) argues, tries to keep one in the 'sleep of carnal security' (*Schlaf der fleischlichen Sicherheit*).

Like Francke's followers, so were those of John Wesley expected to rise early. Wesley was one of the founders of Methodism, which placed an emphasis on feeling, particularly the feeling of being chosen by God, and which Weber classified as an Anglo-American variant of Pietism. At the same time, the focus on methodical living gave it its name, although "method' was a Puritan catchword a century before the world had heard of Methodists" and it encompassed the disciplining, rationalising and systematising of one's life (Tawney, 1990: 201). What had started out as a derogatory term used by its opponents was turned around by the Wesleys, brothers John and Charles, and their associates and followers: They intended to live according to biblical method. The role of Methodism has been debated following the so-called Halévy thesis which held that as a reactionary force Methodism prevented revolution in England, a development the liberal Halévy had been in favour of; with some critics of his thesis who caution us not to overestimate the influence of Methodism or to generalise about the conservatism of its adherents.<sup>108</sup> Open-air sermons, first used for converting Welsh labourers in Bristol, electrified the audience, who responded with enthusiasm, including physical forms of it. Not only were these sermons heard but also subsequently read by followers, many of whom became literate and received an education in the process. After all, "it was [John] Wesley – high Tory in politics, sacerdotal in his approach to organization – who first reached 'Christ's poor'"

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<sup>108</sup> For an anthology on the debate containing excerpts from writings by Halévy, Thompson, Hobsbawm, and other scholars see: Olsen 1990.

(Thompson, 1991: 40) and the countryside. According to E.P. Thompson the combination of indoctrination, the sense of a new community and the socio-psychological disposition for quasi-hysteria orientated towards eternal life at the time attracted the poor to this type of religion, which had a strong sexually repressive component to it. In his sermon on “The Wisdom of God’s Counsels”, John Wesley deplores the inclination of the wealthy to leave their earlier, better and more virtuous ways. Rising early is mentioned among these as a practice to ‘grow in grace’, a practice described as a cross that needs to be taken up. The believer who has acquired some means is severely questioned: “Do you constantly rise as early as you did once? Why not? Is not your soul as precious now as it was then?” (Wesley, 1958: vol. VI: sermon LXVIII: 334). Wesley phrases his questions as a warning. Those ‘Methodists’ who do not act accordingly are sure to ‘fall’, if they have not done so already, and God chooses others. There may still be hope, though, for “as long as you continue to watch and pray, you will not ‘enter into temptations’” (Op. cit.: 336). Sleeping in is a waste of time<sup>109</sup> and a sin for Wesley, as it stands in the way of one’s effort to ‘redeem the time’ (Op. cit.: vol. VII: sermon XCIII; 67-75), a motif here quoted from Ephesians 5: 16 and one that we have found already to have been crucial for Baxter’s thought. Wesley talks about ‘saving’ and even ‘buying up’ time, clearly in analogy with the use of money. As far as sleep is concerned and how to redeem time from it is the subject matter of this sermon. He goes beyond denouncing the spiritual consequences of excessive sleep to consider the – assumed – physical ones. According to him, indulging in sleep leads to neuropathy and diminished eye-sight. Yet, one might inflict such dreadful consequences upon oneself not only by spending too much time in a state of sleep proper, but also by lying awake in bed for too long:

“By soaking (as it is emphatically called) so long between warm sheets, the flesh is, as it were, parboiled and becomes soft and flabby. The nerves in the meantime are quite unstrung, and all the train of melancholy symptoms – faintness, tremors, lowness of spirits, (so called) come on, till life itself is a burden” (Op. cit.: 70).

Wesley’s standard for the duration of sleep is set by nature, but he allows for individual differences and even for different sleep requirements in a person’s lifetime, depending on one’s situation. Anyone who prescribes a fixed amount of hours is wrong, including Richard Baxter who had declared four hours of night-sleep to be sufficient. Baxter, otherwise, as Wesley is quick to assert, a “good and sensible man” (Op. cit.: 68), missed the point. This is not the only sleep-related matter on which they disagreed: While Baxter saw in vigils nothing but a waste of time, the Wesleyans held watch-nights on

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New Year's Eve and on full-moon Fridays (Olsen, 1990: xxxviii), a ritual they had adopted from the Moravian Brethren, who brought a Pietist touch to emerging Methodism. On the other hand, the teachings of Baxter and John Wesley were close to each other in matters of work-discipline, which was encouraged by both.<sup>110</sup> Interestingly, John Wesley's argument for six hours of night sleep as a rule of thumb rests on "experiments" and "observation", from both of which Wesley feels able to deduce a minimum sleep requirement: six hours within the twenty-four, that is two more than Baxter had deemed sufficient. This number applies to men (with the author confessing to his habit of six-and-a-half hours), whereas women would need an additional hour.<sup>111</sup> Note the, albeit carefully worded, physiological speculation about the reason for women's extensive sleep need: "perhaps, because they are, in common of a weaker, as well as a moister, habit of body" (Wesley, 1958: 68). Even more serious than the bodily harm experienced by sleeping and lying in are the consequences for the soul. Those who do not redeem from sleep all the time they can perform "a sin against God" (Op. cit.: 70) and are not fully Christian. Sloth is, once again, one of the practical results of such a harmful pastime. This teaching is not uniquely Wesleyan as we can confidently say by now. Its relative commonality is borne out by the fact that Wesley quotes copiously from High-Church man William Law's work and his view of sleep. Law wrote in a highly figurative manner presenting his readers with good and bad examples of how to lead a Christian life, and how not to. On the how-to side, prayer is to be preferred to sleep, as Law explains:

"sleep is the poorest, dullest refreshment of the body, that is so far from being intended as an enjoyment, that we are forced to receive it either in a state of insensibility, or in the folly of dreams. Sleep is such a dull, stupid state of existence, that even amongst mere animals, we despise them most which are most drowsy. He, therefore, that chooses to enlarge the slothful indulgence of sleep, rather than be early at his devotions to God, chooses the dullest refreshment of the body, before the highest, noblest employment of the soul; he chooses that state which is a reproach to mere animals, rather than that exercise which is the glory of Angels" (Law, 1955: 163).

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<sup>110</sup> Thus E. P. Thompson (1991: 393) states that Baxter's writings were favoured reading material with the early Methodists and frequently reprinted. The readers found the message they were taught and wished to adhere to in their time in those texts, as "many elements of the Methodist work-discipline may be found fully formed in his [i.e. Baxter's] *Christian Directory* of 1673". The significance that Methodism had for Thompson is concisely summarised in his sentence: "Methodism and Utilitarianism, taken together, make up the dominant ideology of the Industrial Revolution" (Op. cit.: 441).

<sup>111</sup> Different standards for men, women and also for children are given in French Catholic eighteenth century devotional books reflecting the medical opinion of the time. According to this, children need ten to eleven hours of sleep a night, women and feeble people – mind the combination! – nine to ten and men six to seven hours (Martin, Ph., 2000: 249).

If this is his advice for getting up in the morning<sup>112</sup>, Law's (Op. cit.: 339) guidelines for going to sleep make ample use of his readers' imagination: They are asked to think of their bed as their grave and of all the arrangements for their funeral having been made. Wesley's reference to Law, the high-church man, is not overly surprising given that it was only after Wesley's death that the Methodists left the Church of England to set up their own denomination – although Law's mystical tendencies were not after Wesley's mind and he later distanced himself from him. And then there were also groups that split from the new denomination which were politically more progressive than Wesley had been.

In order to get away from slothful sleep, Wesley, the Arminian who rediscovered the significance of will and works, prescribes some appropriate activity. He advises his listeners to perform an 'experiment' to find out about his sleep needs by rising earlier each morning, and to keep to one's bedtime continuously, no matter what and even at the cost of offending others, from whose company one withdraws to sleep.<sup>113</sup> This rule is also presented in modern-day manuals of sleep hygiene, as in William Dement's suggestions on how to prevent the accumulation of a so-called 'sleep debt' (Dement/Vaughan 2001). Far from such concerns, however, Wesley is in favour of getting up early, four o'clock in the morning that is for him. As we have found a parallel over time from Wesley to Dement regarding the bedtime hour, there is one to be drawn by inter-cultural comparison concerning the ideology of early rising. Thus in her study of Japanese sleep habits, Brigitte Steger points to interesting similarities between the Christian mindset, as represented by Wesley, and Japanese traditions. She suspects that these similarities have contributed to the integration of Japanese and Western ideologies, thus promoting a swift process of modernisation in Japanese society (Steger, 2004: 315).

### *Kept Awake By Good Discourse*

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<sup>112</sup> In the same genre, St. Francis de Sales (Franz von Sales, 1959: 166) built on the joined authority of the bible, the saints' lives and natural reason when he recommended as much sleep during the night as was needed to do one's work during the day. He thought it was virtuous to get up early after an early night. Rising early is, once again, useful: For both health and sanctity. While Law's analogy from the animal world is negative, Francis's is positive: The birds call us to get up early and praise God.

<sup>113</sup> Wesley states this in quite dramatic terms: "If you desire to rise early, sleep early; secure this point at all events. In spite of the most dear and agreeable companions, in spite of their most earnest solicitations, in spite of entreaties, raileries, or reproaches, rigorously keep your hour. Rise up precisely at your time, and retire without ceremony. Keep your hour, notwithstanding the most pressing business: Lay all things by till the morning. Be it ever so great a cross, ever so great self-denial, keep your hour, or all is over" (Wesley, 1958: Vol. VII: Sermon XCIII: 74). In a similar vein, though less vigorously in his rhetoric, Wesley insists on keeping to one's time of getting up.

Let us conclude this chapter with an apposite reference to fiction: John Bunyan's [1678/1684] *The Pilgrim's Progress* has Hopeful overcome by drowsiness quoting the Old Testament's adage about the labourer's sweet sleep. He is reminded by Christian that they had been warned of falling asleep in the area of the Enchanted Ground. Hopeful realises his mistake and the danger of death lurking in sleep, upon which they both agree to keep each other awake by "good discourse". This discourse is started and this chapter (almost) finished with the following lines:

"When Saints do sleepy grow, let them come hither,  
And hear how these two Pilgrims talk together:  
Yea, let them learn of them in any wise,  
Thus to keep ope their drowsy, slumbring eyes.  
Saints' fellowship, if it be managed well,  
Keeps them awake, and that in spite of Hell"  
(Bunyan, 1965: 176)

Max Weber was well aware of Bunyan and his extreme piety, but for his own work on ascetic Protestantism he "required more practical attitudes. Bunyan was too extreme a case, bordering ... on the psychopathological and certainly the neurotic"; the "normalized and disciplined" type of Puritan mass behaviour is what moved the readers of Baxter's casuistry (Whimster, 2007: 62). It is quite probable that for most people in Western countries everyday life as well as popular imagination have come to be more dominated by the character of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, the economic man for whom religion had become a sideline, than by Bunyan's pilgrim (Weber 1992 and 2002, referring to Irish critic Edward Dowden). The spirit of wakefulness, however differently motivated and orientated nowadays, has survived this change of cast.

## **7 Bible Sleep Cure: An Excursus on Contemporary Religious Sleep Discipline**

From the past we are moving to the present: Having mostly dealt with historical stages of Christian sleep disciplines and their interpellations of sleeping and waking subjects so far, this chapter takes a turn to the present. It also takes a turn to the ‘new world’, North American, and more precisely, the United States of America. It is a society with a religious culture markedly different from European societies, whether in debates on secularisation or re-sacralisation one prefers to see the religious US as the exception or to assign this part to, in many places, not-so-religious Europe. The preceding three chapters dealt with sleep disciplines at the origins and development of pastoral power, including moments of its ascetic challenging and the incorporation of the ascetic challenge by pastoral power: The more moderate versions of sleep discipline, that is those versions not giving in to ascetic excess, were more forthcoming to the needs of pastoral power than the reform movements, which tried to reinforce harsher measures against the luxury of sleep. This chapter is one step further removed from pastoral power determining force of society, after its waning in the eighteenth century. Or is it really? After all, the pastors are very much present in American public life and culture. Whether it is Rick Warren, who delivered the invocation at President Obama’s inauguration ceremony, or Joel Osteen, also known as “the smiling preacher” and frequent guest of CNN talk-show host Larry King, or even a woman such as Joyce Meyer, who believes that God wants his people to prosper and, amongst other things, offers some advice on how to get one’s day ‘started right’ with God. Yet, even if their ministries show some reflexes of the pastorate, their very plurality, the fact that they are many and that they are preaching to different flocks, differs from this model of power. A combination of charismatic and pastoral power may be helpful to explain their cultural and political significance. However, we are not so much interested in religious leadership figures, may they be adequately portrayed as pastors or not, but in their messages. Evangelical voices centre on the bible, the word of God – and in this they also differ from the pastorate of the Church, at least from its Roman Catholic model.

We have encountered the interpellative force of scripture earlier, but how is it synergetic today with the interpellations issued by science or its popular mediations?

Health advice and life-style help books are a popular genre occupying considerable shelf-space in the bookshops. Literature on sleep troubles and remedies for them are also located there. We have mentioned them in our discussion of contemporary debates on the sleep-deprived society. The German and UK examples of this sort of self-help do not tend to transport religious messages with their advice and do not seem to have a religious agenda to proselytise readers, listeners and watchers (if we think of internet, audio/video, lecture formats). The US examples, both Moore-Ede's from an economic and Dement's from a medical perspective respectively, employ religious rhetoric, but this is not to distract from the fact that the chief authority in which name they are appealing, i.e. the Subject, which is hailing the subjects, is Economics or Medicine. It is neither Religion as an institution nor God as a divine presence. However, it is in the US where we can find an explicitly religious discourse on sleep. Not only secular – or maybe esoterically inclined – individuals feel themselves or their relations and friends to be in need of sleep advice. Evangelical Christians and those close to their beliefs do have sleeping problems as well and look for ways to get rid of them. In order to achieve this, however, like their 'secular' counter-parts they will need to discipline themselves and their bodies. Rules for how to do this and help for the evangelical clientèle come custom-tailored to their specific needs, in the form of a booklet titled "The Bible Cure for Sleep Disorders" (Colbert 2001). This is part of a series of so-called "Bible Cures" for all sorts of different conditions calling out for change: There are cures for arthritis, weight loss and muscle gain, headaches, candida and yeast infections, and prostrate disorders. This is not an exhaustive list, though, as there are thirty titles in this series. The one cure that interests us, the one for sleep disorders, is materially a booklet, and its cover proudly announces: "More Than 2 Million Bible Cures Sold!". Thereby the quality of the message that is to be discovered inside is proclaimed. The author's name of this and other cures is given with his "M.[edicinae]D.[octor]" title, establishing and imprinting his authority on the volume as well as on the reader's mind. One of the advertisements at the end tells the reader – who is just in the process of being convinced to buy the "Divine Health Nutritional Products" and maybe go to the website or even contact the author himself by post or phone – that his medical doctorate as well as a Bachelor of Science in Biology, was obtained from the Oral Roberts School of Medicine in Tulsa, Oklahoma, a school named after a pivotal figure in American Evangelicalism.

Oral Roberts made his career in healing ministry and what he and his followers called ‘crusades’ [!] from tent to televangelist and founded the university that bears his name in the 1960s. While it still exists as a whole, the medical school closed down in 1989. Allegedly built on instruction by personal, divine communication, the school was central to the mission of this religious enterprise, as it combined faith and prayer practices with medical research. Like all of Colbert’s “Bible Cures”, so is the one designed to grapple with sleep disorders, firmly based on the assumption that faith and healing go together. This assumption is often enriched – in quite a literal sense – by the belief that God wants his people to prosper, including but not limited to material wealth. Beliefs such as these are frequently referred to as prosperity gospel with groups operating in the field of Faith or health-and-wealth preaching. These beliefs and groups have been criticised by other evangelicals for distorting the biblical foundation<sup>114</sup>. Less neutral and more pejorative labels for what has been (sometimes) proposed by one side and attacked by the other include the ‘gospels’ of “Name-it-and-claim-it” and “Blab-it-and-grab-it”. While some central players in the field of such religious teachings can be made out, delineating a coherent belief system or identifying a movement is less easy. Not least of all because professed beliefs and adherence tends to change, which might be rather understandable in view of the pejorative labels the actors on this stage would like to escape from. A large part of the audience of prosperity preachers is reached by satellite and cable television as well as by the internet, which is why one cannot as readily identify the community of believers as would be the case with a territorial or spatially defined community.

From an anthropological perspective, Simon Coleman (2000: 41 et seq.) describes the early days of the healing revival in North America after the Second World War and the emphasis of the revival on a God who always wants the faithful to be healed:

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<sup>114</sup> Heated debates about this have occurred on the internet. For a comparatively balanced view of prosperity theology from a British evangelical perspective, see: Perriman (ed.) (2003). There the historical roots of this type of theology as well as its systematic problems are discussed. The book also pinpoints the reliance of health-and-wealth teachings on Old Testament Wisdom, particularly the writing presented earlier in this part: “Texts from Proverbs have been found in support of such mundane practices as working longer hours, taking a second job, or seeking promotion” (Op. cit.: 55). Proverbial support has been used to justify the condemnation of idleness and the encouragement of industry and wealth (Op. cit.: 164; see also: 256, fn. 30; 257, fn. 55).



"More general themes of prosperity also began to emerge in the revival, including the idea that financial blessings could be provided for the believer. A key figure here was Oral Roberts, who claimed that in 1947 he had 'discovered' 3 John 2 with its message that 'thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth'. In the mid-1950s, at a time when he needed financial resources to fund his television ministry, Roberts created the 'Blessing-Pact' ... Subscribers who contributed \$100 to his work were promised a refund if they did not receive the gift back from a totally unexpected source within one year. Roberts also published a book called *God's Formula for Success and Prosperity* (1955)" (Coleman, 2000: 41 et seq.).

Roberts' ingenuity in exploring believers' financial resources did not stop there, however, and in the 1970s he devised the concept of 'seed-faith', according to which the faithful donor (to Roberts) would receive a generous monetary return (from God). His slogan was: "You Sow It, Then God Will Grow It". He invited other preachers of his or similar persuasion to his university in Tulsa, the one where Colbert, author of the bible cures, studied Biology and Medicine. Oral Roberts net-worked with like-minded colleagues, but he also kept his distance and autonomy from other players in the field. While Coleman's account concentrates on the wealth aspect, which these different preachers share in spite of other differences and attempts at distinction, let us not forget the aspect of health. The God who wants the faithful to prosper also wants them to be healthy. We shall see how in Dr Colbert's counselling divine logic or 'God's plan', as he likes to call it, looks remarkably like instrumental rationality. We shall also investigate how what we can reconstruct as the latest stage of a religious, Christian sleep discipline consists in the instrumentalisation of sleep and in making the sleeper useful. This form of instrumentalisation and utility thinking has left behind the anti-sleep rhetoric of most of the earlier or older disciplines. Yet, it is a far cry from a situation where the free sleep of each would be the condition for the free sleep of all, to paraphrase and apply Marx's dictum on freedom. On the contrary: The believing problem sleeper will have to follow a disciplinary regime/n to find good and right sleep. The irony is that not only sleep deprivation, but also sleep promotion is constructed as discipline. In this case the idea is to guide the reader from disorder to order, from sleep disorder to order.

*"The Bible Cure for Sleep Disorders" – A Close Reading*

Although the text abounds with a believer's confidence in the cure, a comprehensive caveat is issued right at the start, stating that neither medical advice nor a substitute for treatment by a physician is intended and that no responsibility for consequences of acting on the text is assumed by publisher and author. However, a more reassuring note opens the preface: "If sleeping disorders have left you feeling exhausted, depleted and defeated, rest assured that these things are not God's will for you. You can discover real rest and wonderful refreshing in God" (Colbert, 2001: iv).

A couple of points are remarkable about these two opening sentences: First of all, the reader is personally addressed as "you". This is a recurring feature of the text, as one is encouraged to personalise one's own sleeping problems and view them in the light of one's own personal relationship with God. Such an individualistic<sup>115</sup> approach seems to be very much in line with main-stream ideas about the self, whether of a religious or of a secular provenance. Second, "God" is introduced right in the first sentence. This God's will and its aims are personalised, they work "for you". It is *in* him (this God is thought of definitely as a male being) that the sleep solution lies – not primarily in medical measures. These, however, are not played out against God and faith in what follows, which will be important to bear in mind for understanding this approach. Third, whereas the negative of sleep is directly introduced as "sleeping disorders", the positive is rendered in a broader, more general way as "rest" and "refreshing". While a benevolent reader might be content with this as representing an affirmative view of sleep, the critic interested in discipline and ideology will look beyond that: The booklet offers numerous biblical quotations<sup>116</sup>, sometimes as part of the continuous text, sometimes set aside in little boxes. Many of these quotations talk about "rest" and "refreshing", rather than about sleep plain and simple. Suffice it to say here that the identification of sleep and rest is not unproblematic.

After some more God and bible talk, we are presented with a thoroughly functionalist explanation of sleep: It is there "to recharge your mind and body" (v) [like you would recharge a battery], the mind gets "a mental break" [from the otherwise standard activity], and sleep "helps to restore your memory" – a 'fact', which has been recently

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<sup>115</sup> According to empirical research, American Evangelicals tend to think in terms of individual morals and inter-personal relationships, even when it comes to more meso- or macro-level issues such as business and the economy. They believe that personal honesty, which is a favoured value, makes a difference and are little concerned with structural changes (s. Smith, C., 1998: 203-210).

<sup>116</sup> Different translations of the bible are used in the *Cure*, yet the "New Living Translation" seems to be the author's favourite. It is a product of evangelical scholars aiming at a contemporary audience and often leaving the demand for a literal rendering aside in favour of some arguable interpretations.

questioned by some sleep researchers. Yet, rest and sleep are critical for health and body; we are told, and warned against the debilitating effects of lack of it. From this functionalist explanation we are led on to a summary of shocking statistics revealing that “Sleep disorders are at epidemic levels in the United States” (vi). This alarming news is conveyed to a US American audience, and the whole text could be called rather (US)American-centric in its critique of the deplorable cultural effects, due to which people do not get enough sleep. However, the booklet extends the promise to get out of this malaise:

“With the help of the practical and faith-inspiring wisdom contained in this Bible cure booklet, you no longer have to suffer through sleepless nights or drag yourself through exhausted days. It’s possible to start right now sleeping as soundly as a newborn baby – even if you’ve experienced sleep disorders for all of your life” (Colbert, 2001: vii et seq.)

With maybe truly American can-do attitude, the reader is picked up where s/he presumably stands, that is in a misery of everyday and everynight sleeplessness. To a religious, and particularly an evangelical readership, the metaphoric speech of the baby’s sleep may resonate with ideas of being born again in Christ. Furthermore, the appeal to start “right now” strangely resembles the Kairos of the kingdom of God. Now is the time to repent and believe! How does this work? The following paragraph gives a preview of the things to come:

“Through the power of good nutrition, healthy lifestyle choices, exercise, vitamins and supplements and, most importantly of all, through the power of dynamic faith, you can be empowered to sleep soundly and live in the robust health and vigor of a rested life” (Op. cit.: viii).

Being empowered through the power may not constitute a rhetorical masterpiece, but the activist tenor of the writing clearly gains from such a manner of phrasing. The enumeration of powers to be employed stresses the message that there are many options to choose from and that it is all about making the right choices. At the same time, sleep appears as something one really needs to work on. While some may have thought that sleep is about letting go of power, Colbert’s sound sleeper needs to be empowered in order to be such a one.

“Sleep disorders are not your destiny. With God’s grace, energy, power and increasing joy await you! As you read this book, prepare to win the battle against sleep disorders. This Bible Cure booklet is filled with practical steps,

hope, encouragement and valuable information on how to develop a healthy, empowered lifestyle. In this book, you will  
*uncover God's divine plan of health  
for body, soul and spirit  
through modern medicine, good nutrition  
and the medicinal power  
of Scripture and prayer"*  
(Colbert, 2001: 8; Italics or.).

While the text analysed seems to get slightly repetitive, some new nuances have turned up in the paragraph just quoted. The suggested activism already encountered in previous parts comes to a head here, where a battle has to be fought. So, in order to be able to sleep, one has not only to make use of martial tactics, but to fight it out as well. Finally, the book's purpose is summarised in a mantra-like form, set in italics as the prayers that follow throughout the text. Apart from this formal aspect, the relation of faith and medicine is worth highlighting: God and medicine are not at odds with each other in this perspective, nor is medicine only seen as a means to a divine end. In a more complex vein, bible and prayer do themselves have medicinal qualities. This argumentative strategy allows for the combining of "modern medicine" and the religious 'medicine'. Insofar as it acknowledges whatever is modern about 'modern medicine', the strategy presents itself as modern. However, it is so only by precluding any concept of functional differentiation between religion and medicine – in which respect it is a-modern.

Let us now examine how this modern/a-modern concatenation is carried out in the main text. The first chapter emphasises the necessity of rest, reminding the reader of God's resting on the seventh day. One is thus persuaded to overlook the difference between rest and sleep, and the fact that a resting God does not necessarily make for a sleeping one. After all, the symbolism of the sleeping divinity is hardly what Colbert wants to evoke. Pondering what the text does not say is just as revealing as reflecting on what it does say: It is clear that only some chains of associations are encouraged by the text, while others are discarded.

Sleep is seen as God's gift. From this religious statement it goes on, rather abruptly, to a technical description of sleep: Non-REM and REM sleep as well as the four sleep stages are pointed out. From the discussion of stage three sleep we can glean how the modern/a-modern concatenation actually works: Next to the description of the third stage a boxed-in, italicised quotation from the King James Version of the book of

Psalms (Ps 4: 8) has been inserted: “I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety” (Colbert, 2001: 6). No further explanation of the psalm quote is given, no attempt at linking stage three sleep and the prayer is made. Apparently, the modern/a-modern concatenation works without hermeneutics, but simply by juxtaposition. After a brief, sober note on dreams, different dyssomnias and parasomnias are distinguished, all under the suggestive heading: “What Sleep Disorder Do You Have?” (Op. cit.: 7). The reader, already labelled as a being suffering from a disorder, is asked some questions about his/her sleeping habits and given a quiz to become aware of his/her potential sleeping disorder. The statement: “... your rest is very important to God, for it is a key principle of all that He created” (Op. cit.: 15) and a prayer of thanks and for help to see any health-wise deficiencies in one’s own life lead back to the religious message.

The second chapter deals with nutrition, not without mentioning the “Divine Health Multivitamin”, which contains over 50 vitamins and other nutrients, and advice about cutting down on caffeine, sugar and carbohydrates. The recipe for a protein smoothie to be consumed before bedtime is given, as is – in the context of the sleep-harming effects of obesity – a table to help one calculate one’s Body Mass Index (BMI), and a test for potential food allergies, which can also cause restlessness and insomnia. The Conclusion plays a prosperity-oriented tune: “God is for you. He is on your side. He wants you to succeed in every way possible – in body, mind and spirit” (Colbert, 2001: 27). Success, as individualism, may also be a value of the less religious-minded moderns. After another prayer of thanks and for help, the reader is asked to perform another activity. This is called “A Bible Cure Prescription”. It has to be done in three steps: Describing one’s symptoms in three lines, circling what sleep disorder one feels to be suffering from. For this, there is a ready-made list of five disorders to choose from, and, finally, writing “a prayer thanking God that He is for you according to Psalm 116: 7”. For this prayer there are four lines, which can be used. Fortified by this writing and praying exercises, mental as well as physical health is addressed in its relevance for a good night’s sleep.

Chapter three encourages the readers to exercise and work on their fitness. Too much of the wrong sort of stress, we learn, can produce “negative, failure mentalities” (Op. cit.: 35) – mentalities, in short, that are not successful. Sometimes the juxtapositions of health tips and bible quotations produce a bizarre effect: While, for example, the continuous text praises the advantages of aerobic exercise for sleep, the box next to it

has the book of Exodus (23: 12) command to stop work on the seventh day of week and to grant rest to ox, donkey, “and the son of your female slave, as well as your stranger” (Colbert, 2001: 39). The activity-craving addressee of the text is then animated to calculate his/her heart rate and to consider the sleeping environment. All distractions are to be kept out of the bedroom, in which nothing else but sleep is supposed to take place. One wonders where this leaves and places sex, but there is no mention of it. Bible reading is recommended, or the reading of a novel – if that suits the sleeper-to-be, who has to ponder the right choice of mattress and pillow/s. That s/he is potentially not alone in the bed/room shows the discussion of one’s “partner’s” – immediately qualified as “spouse” – snoring. US snoring statistics are matched by the boxed-in never-sleeping God of the psalms. As practical measures, a snore alarm for the snorer and a noise machine in the background for the “non-snoring spouse” (Colbert, 2001: 47) are recommended. For both products, the same brand is promoted. The ensuing discussion of early birds and night owls lays bare underlying assumptions about the audience, as well as background ideology: “Night owls should choose jobs that allow them to work in the afternoon and evening hours” (Op. cit.: 50). This at the same time suggests the reader’s ability to indeed have a choice of jobs to opt from *and* presents the doing of a job as a product of one’s own choosing. To what extent this can be applied to many of the night-shift workers is not an issue, but at least they are mentioned and provided with the idea of using a light box or light visor to help them adjust to different sleep-wake rhythms. Use of the visor is also advocated for those sunlight-deprived Northerners, whereas their Southern compatriots should have their lunches *al fresco*. Napping, either in the form of a thirty-minute power nap or as a ninety-minute – one sleep-cycle – siesta, is next on the list. Bible quotation, prayer and a check-list, which summarises the tips one has learned (“Check the ones you plan to use”, op. cit.: 56) close this chapter.

Supplements are another building block of the cure, the one of the fourth chapter. One of these, the “Divine Health Multivitamin for men and women is an excellent multivitamin” (58). It can be bought online, at a reduced price we are told, from Dr Colbert, whose picture features on the box of tablets. Yet, there are also valerian, passionflower, hops, kava, St. John’s wort, and 5-HTP, which is used to increase one’s serotonin level, to be taken into account. Melatonin might be considered, too, depending on the individual. Doses for these supplements against insomnia as for magnesium and vitamin E against periodic limb movement disorder are given, and the

potential benefit of supplementing iron for those suffering from restless leg syndrome is claimed. Pharmaceuticals, we read, may have side effects, although newer ones, used for a short time, less so. This part of the cure is very much about consuming, and one of the side-effects of this health consumerism is the boosting of a whole industry. Of course, such political issues are far from the cure's author and his individualistic readers. They are now asked to pray to the "Dear Lord" for the following favour: "Show me what vitamins and minerals my body may be lacking, and help me to support the natural, God-given sleep that you intended for me to enjoy with the right program of supplements. Amen" (Colbert, 2001: 68). Can this be interpreted as an instance of a closer concatenation of the modern and the a-modern aspects of this approach? This, however, is hardly so. In spite of the fact that in this prayer we have less of a mere juxtaposition of religion and health, it is still not completely left behind. The vitamin-and-minerals talk comes to stand somewhat uneasily with the religious language of the prayer. And this religious language is in itself inconsistent: "The Lord", God, is addressed in the manifest text. However, "the *God-given* sleep that *you* intended for me" strikes one as strange: Why is the addressee objectified? Would one not rather expect something along the lines of "you, God, help me to support the natural sleep *you give/have given ...*"? As it is, however, the prayer text seems to suggest that the "you" addressed and the God who gives sleep are two separate entities. This raises the question who the actual addressee of this act of worship is. God is called to show and help, he intends and generally gives sleep – but he shows and helps *me*, he intends *for me*. This *Me* is also the recipient of the gift of sleep, obtained with a little help from the supplements. Could it be the case that the hidden addressee in this prayer of an individualistic religion of success with God's blessing is none other but the sender of this prayer him/herself? Surely, it is s/he who will have to choose and take – the supplements.

"Do you consider your insomnia mild or severe?" asks the next "Bible Cure Prescription", presupposing that the reader – who may have turned to this booklet for advice on other sleep disorders – is actually suffering from this particular condition. The check-list of supplements with boxes to be ticked, right below this question, puts it more generally and personally again: "my sleep disorder" (Colbert, 2001: 69). In striving for order, the reading self is encouraged to embrace and appropriate his or her disorder.

The fifth and final chapter is about resting in God. From the biblical idea of abiding in the vine, which is Christ, we are brought to some more self-therapeutic concerns: It, here: stress, has entirely to do with how you perceive it. This reminds us of cognitive behavioural therapies and their insistence on training oneself to think the right thoughts. Let us read the wisdom on stress Dr Colbert has in store for us under the heading “Abiding in the Word of God”:

“Since excessive stress is really all about your perception of the stress, it’s critically important to change your perceptions so that they are in line with God’s Word. You see, if you truly believe that something can never change, your defeated, hopeless attitude will cause you to feel overwhelmed by stress that robs you of sleep. Therefore, to overcome stress you must learn to take control of your thoughts” (Colbert, 2001: 72).

Blinding out the, at least, possibility that some things might never change or that change may be beyond the reach of the individual subject, this form of stress management is far more demanding than the techniques presented to us thus far. Arranging one’s sleeping environment and taking supplements compare feebly with this mode of self exerting thought-control. The thoughts one has to get rid of are described as “negative, hurtful and destructive carnal” (Op. cit.: 73) ones, yet what makes for the carnality of these stressors is not spelled out at all. Thoughts tend to be conveyed in language and here lie further dangers as well as hopes. Colbert sounds like a somewhat peculiar speech-act theorist when he states: “Your words actually have the power to heal or to kill, to strengthen or to wound, to unite or to divide. Controlling your words is extremely important” (Colbert, 2001: 75). The peculiarity lies in the individual solipsism of such advice, and this is very different indeed from doing things with words for the purpose of inter-subjective, mutual understanding. Forgiveness, joy and God’s love are illustrated with biblical support, and the “law of rest” is declared as a remaining “spiritual principle” for Christians, although they do not live under the law of Judaism anymore. The final prayer for God’s companionship in the struggle for sleep is followed by a ‘prescription’ that asks the reader to “personalize” an adaptation of Psalm 23 on God as shepherd: It is a cloze and the ‘personalising’ for each blank is to be done by inserting the first-person personal pronoun: *my*, *me*, ending with “*I will live in the house of the Lord forever*” (Colbert, 2001: 81). This is where the interpellated subject becomes fully aware of him/herself and relates the essence of this self to the ultimate Subject, to God.



A “Personal Note From Don and Mary Colbert” invites one to enter into “a personal relationship” (Op. cit.: 82) with Christ, for which another prayer is given, plus an e-mail address to order “some materials that will help you become established in your relationship with the Lord” after having “just made the most important decision of your life” (83). Advertisements for “Divine Health Nutritional Products” and a “Divine Health Sleep Formula” are placed on the last two pages of the booklet.

### *Christian Sleep Discipline A/Modern*

By way of summarising the findings of our close reading, we can say that the sleep disciplinary ideology has been re-invented within a framework of prosperity <sup>117</sup> theology. The ascetic practices of shortening and segmenting sleeping time as well as of creating a mortifying environment for sleep, have receded into the background. Still, has the disciplinary practice, with its methods of controlling and subjecting bodies, a model of practice that characterised the discourses of sleep deprivation really been left behind? The fact that meticulous care is necessary to succeed in fighting sleep disorders, as outlined by the *Bible Cure*, casts some doubt on this emancipatory interpretation. While sleep has been regarded as ceasing from action in other contexts, these curative procedures turn sleep into something that is all about actions, external (as in adjustments of the environment and the consumption of supplements) and internal (self-exerted thought-control) actions. It is all about ‘doing’ sleep and about doing it right. One might be tempted to raise an objection to this critical summary: After all, it is the individual self, who is the agent of his/her action, who can choose to follow the guidelines of the cure, who can opt for stress management by thought-control, who decides to believe in a God intending one’s success, ...

... and who lets him/herself be hailed as “You” by the *Bible Cure*. This brings us back, once again, to the Althusserian model of ideology as interpellation. Of course, I have deliberately emphasised the prosperity orientation and obsession with success, both of which undergird the cure. This was done not to distort its argument, but in

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<sup>117</sup> More recently, some pastors, like Joel Osteen, have tried to rescue the label of ‘prosperity’ from being identified with money-grabbing. In their interpretations, prosperity means being blessed and endowed with a wealth that cannot be reduced to monetary terms. While such moves may be applauded as progressive on the one hand, on the other hand they also contribute to a self-immunising strategy: Those who have not made it financially, may still feel ‘blessed’, and their presence is therefore not a point against the validity or truth of this reformed prosperity gospel.

order to point to the proliferating and pullulating of ideology, even where and especially where its existence is denied. However strong or weak the emphasis on success may be interpreted to be, the *Bible Cure* is to be placed within the wider framework of the prosperity gospel. This gospel has accentuated work, maybe at times even going beyond categorising it as *ratio cognoscendi* and considering it the *ratio essendi* of salvation? This is a moot point. Nevertheless, the imperative of work has been extended, from the purely economic sphere to those concerns of health that require working on one's own body. The *Cure* plays a part as one of the voices in a concert, which has been described as "the ultramodern re-configuration of the situation of religion in society" in an "age of pluralist secularisation" (Willaime 2006), with the example of the prosperity gospel showing that

"the shift from other-worldly to this-worldly salvation has taken place in the sphere of religion as well. In the last analysis the religious world confirms the view that work is just as much a genuinely religious value as it is a secular value" (Op. cit.: 85).

It is no longer just about paid labour or voluntary community work. It has been extended to body work and even to working on such bodies that once seemed to be as far from work as it gets: sleeping bodies.

Translating this discourse from the level of ideology to the level of discipline through interpellation, the point would be: Even self-discipline is still discipline, even self-interpellation is still interpellation. Before I start interpellating myself or my self, I have always already been interpellated by the ultimate Subject, here: by God. As an ideological practice, discipline always works best when it is acted out as self-discipline. About this there is nothing much new: The Israelites following Wisdom, the pillar saints in the desert, the monks (and nuns), the ascetic Protestants, even a Catholic laity instructed by priests, who had themselves been instructed by moral theologians – all of them were subjectified, made subject/s, by religious ideology already. Only once the ideological nature, i.e.: culture, of subjectification as self-constitution is understood, do we see more clearly how discipline and self-discipline are related. In this perspective, self-discipline is indeed the most 'successful' form of discipline. Yet, I think, it is precisely this ideological success of an ideology of success one needs to resist. In a pan-ideological society this can only mean refusal, no matter how hopeless such a cause may seem given the all-encompassing grip of ideology.

## *Contexts and Comparisons*

If we briefly recall the sleep advice of Zulley, Dement, and others that we have observed in chapter 3, we find some striking similarities as well as contrasts. With the other authors, the *Bible Cure* shares a therapeutic interest, but this has not always been characteristic for an evangelical point of view: “Conservatives were bitterly critical of liberals for abandoning the idea of sin and for turning salvation from an other-worldly destination to therapeutic improvement in this life. Yet, a generation later, evangelicals were rewriting the gospel in precisely the same way” (Bruce, S., 2002: 211). The later generation, which Bruce has in mind, is writing and reading in the 1980s, but their doings still go on, as we have seen. I am not so sure if Steve Bruce’s general diagnosis of an abandonment of sin in these circles is accurate. It seems rather that the ways in which sin is defined and what counts as such have changed, up to the point where not seeking therapeutic improvement becomes a sin! In thus qualifying his statement on sin, we can align ourselves with Bruce’s (Op. cit.: 212) perceptive remark about the way in which the image of God has changed in the recent history of evangelical therapeutics:

“God is still there, but he is no longer the strict father who crushes our pride and brings us to see our worthlessness. He is the psychotherapist who can help us to be more fulfilled and to achieve more in this life.”

Being more fulfilled and achieving more in life is also what Zulley’s and Dement’s sleep advice aim at. For their authority to be legitimised, however, they do not need to invoke the authority of the bible or God.

In practical terms, of course, many pieces of advice are identical and likewise to be found, whether we turn to Zulley’s, Dement’s or Colbert’s writings. Even the techniques of engaging their reader’s mind are the same: Both Zulley and Colbert invite their readers to do a quiz. In doing so, the readers subject themselves to a classification, and once properly classified they have gained a new attribute for themselves or their selves.

In other respects, there are remarkable differences between the ‘secular’ and the religious texts: While the sleep advice given by the former usually defines the bedroom as the place for both sleep and sex, the bible cure has no mention of the latter. In

Colbert's book, there are only snoring relations, no sexual ones. This may not come as a huge surprise in view of the pejorative sense in which Colbert speaks of 'carnal thoughts'. Of course, some readers may find this appealing and discover that the biblical cure works for them. If this should be so, it does not detract anything from the ideological character of this cure, nor of the ideological character of the secular alternatives on offer. Ideology works best where it is effective, and it is the effective ideologies that are the most interesting and socially significant ones.

Finally, let me place our analysis of the 'bible cure' in a wider context of historical continuities: Against Jim Beckford's characterising of charismatic Christianity as modern due to its instrumental rationality and other factors, Philip Mellor (2007: 602) holds that this type of rationality was displayed in non-modern contexts already as well: "the medieval exploration of the religious potentialities of the body through the imitation of the suffering of Christ was, arguably, as thoroughly instrumentalised as the body techniques employed by contemporary charismatics". To this we are now able to add as an example the discourse of the 'bible cure' that we have just analysed, but in our analysis we have gone beyond the concept of body techniques of sleep and examined this contemporary text as an instance of sleep discipline as religious ideology.

## 8 Vigil/ance Continued: Materialised Wake-Up Calls

So far, in this study we have mostly dealt with wake-up calls as texts: Scripture, theological treatises, or religious and secular self-help books. Our interpretation has assumed that the words constituting these texts have a performative dimension to them, that is: They do something, and we have chosen to describe what they do as waking up. This choice has made us reconstruct the texts as wake-up calls. Complementing our analysis, we shall now turn from texts to things. If we consider the things that act on us to wake us up and keep us awake, we can account for their performative dimension as one of materialised wake-up calls. In doing so, we still apply a textual metaphor to the things we live with. However, I would like to mediate between the strong position of 'reading' material culture as text and one that insists on the non-textual *sui generis* qualities of material culture. While we should, particularly as sociologists who are prone to lapse into idealism, share with the latter its insistence on the genuine, irreducible materiality of things, we cannot help but notice that in experiencing things humans produce texts, and that we do not have a textless experience to work with as social scientists. Presentation and discussion of these issues form the first part of this chapter.

The following explorations are undertaken in search of a material/ist antidote to an idealism that has delved into the depths of abstract meanings, but at the same time been pretty forgetful about things. Controversies in the sociology of religion provide a good example for this idealist penchant. The loss of religious meaning is as eagerly stated by some, as it is ferociously disputed by others, but what has happened to religious things, what happened to those things ensuring vigil/ance, sleep discipline's – if you like – material helpers? In the course of explorations, we will move from the church to the factory bell, via the disciplining device of the 'Silent Monitor', which Robert Owen used in his cotton mills at New Lanark to keep his workers alert. The next and concluding leg of our by necessity brief exploratory journey through material culture in this chapter will take us from the alarm clock to the new alerting device 'Clocky' and the questions it raises about the future of thingly vigilance. Of course, the material culture of sleep encompasses many more phenomena than the ones selected for this chapter: The history of beds (Wright 2004), the spatial ordering of sleep in Victorian housing and bedrooms (Crook 2004), but also night-shirts and pyjamas (Elias, 1997: 414 et seq.: fn. 76) and their roles in struggles over masculinity and

femininity – to name but a few. The selection of material culture presented here is due to the overall structure of this text: The framework is one of vigil/ance and its sleep disciplines and wake-up calls, may they be religiously motivated or otherwise. The vigil<sup>118</sup> as I understand it is a practice generalised into the attitude of vigilance. I call it vigil/ance to remind us of its roots. And it is this vigil/ance that the material culture discussed here aims at.

### *'Material Culture' as a Concept*

In recent years we have been witness to a growing interest in perspectives on material culture. First developed within archaeology, concerns with objects and their materiality have by now been diffused into numerous other disciplines. This is not to state a complete absence of things material before what may be constructed as a Turn. Whether the different materialisms have neglected concrete objects or not is a debatable point, which cannot further concern us here. We can discover a trace of sensitivity for what is now called 'material culture' in one of the classic sociological texts, Norbert Elias' *Civilising Process*. In his discussion of changing table manners, which as I see it is more a discussion of changes in manner books than of actual manners, he reflects on the role of the knife. This reflection deserves some attention, because in some sense it foreshadows later theoretical developments. At the same time, however, it seems strangely out-of-date. For Elias, the knife is the product of an incarnation (*Inkarnat*), an incarnation of 'souls'. The term 'souls' is put in inverted commas in the original, which may hint at the author's distancing himself from historical meanings associated with it. 'Incarnation', however, can scarcely conceal its religious roots. By contrast, the hint towards changeable drives and wishes that manifest themselves in the knife are clearly reminiscent of psychoanalysis. Finally, the knife is also an embodiment (*Verkörperung*) of historical situations and laws of constitution (Elias, 1997: 255). In his reflection on the knife, incarnation and embodiment coincide, terminologically at least. This points to a problem that is still very much with us, mostly non-users of a terminology of incarnation as I would

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<sup>118</sup> For a discussion of the "vigil of care", which is contrasted with the "gift of care", see: Fox 1999. This is developed for a medical or health-related context, which I feel can and has to be extended. Whereas Fox points out the Christian roots of the concept of the gift, he remains silent on those of the vigil. Breaking this silence is what this study is about.

presume: How the 'souls', or whatever it is that has come after them, are related to the things. It is a contentious issue in contemporary studies of material culture, as the following brief overview will show.

In an effort to counter functionalist explanations as well as cross-cultural generalisations, questions about the social meanings of artefacts have come to the fore. These questions have often been posed in terms of material culture as a kind of writing, even if of a second-order type, or a form of textual production. Viewed in this light, we are talking about a structured system of signs and "an articulated and structured silent material discourse" (Shanks/Tilley, 1987). One of the radical challenges this approach presents lies in its wholehearted embrace of the fact that translation of the (quasi-)textual products involves changing the past, and that truth is to be found in this transformation of the past (Ibd.: 115 et seq.). In a slightly more pronounced manner, at the end of his study on the rock carvings at Nämforsen its author Christopher Tilley (1991: 172) claims: "Understanding of this material, any 'data' in the human sciences does not conclude. It just stops when we get bored or do not have anything else to say." Such self-confessed decisionism might not sound convincing or appealing to everyone, and some serious doubts have been voiced about the material-culture-as-text approach. Does it not, by its focus on meaning, tend to obscure the very materiality of objects it set out to explore? And is it thereby not perpetuating the dichotomy of mind and matter rather than resolving it? Nicole Boivin (2004), for instance, demands a holistic return to the material world. This should take the human body seriously as well as the links between material, biological and cognitive changes. More polemical in comparison is Bjørnar Olsen's (2003) reaction against the textual model and his appeal to move beyond and "after Text". He wants to "re-member things" and is not altogether happy with the growing emphasis on the (human) body, as genuine concerns about other material(itie)s appear to him to be missing from research undertaken in that direction:

"Despite the timely advent of the body in social studies, one often gets the feeling that the human body is the only flesh of the world and that this spiritual lived-in body continues to roam around rather unconstrainedly in an intentional world held together almost solely by human cognition" (Op. cit.: 88).

Olsen goes on, building on Bruno Latour, to introduce "the silent thing" as an agent to be taken into account, however, this clearly is problematic. First of all, not all things

are silent – some of those to be dealt with in this chapter, bells and alarm clocks, are not. Others, like the “Silent Monitor” Robert Owen introduced to his cotton mills at New Lanark in Scotland, are. If the ringing of the bells, however, was subsumed under silence – understood as absence of speech, not absence of sound –, then we would be back at the textual model Olsen wants to get away from.<sup>119</sup>

A more promising route for our purposes consists in taking note of the sensual turn or revolution in studies of material culture (Howes 2006). Followers of this turn have also criticised the textual model; their reason for doing so, however, is the textualists’ neglect of the senses and sensuality. With the exception of the visual sense – thus their critique of so-called ocular-centrism, a critique we find prefigured in Foucault’s analyses of the clinical and the panoptical gazes – the other human senses have been largely left out by researchers. In this model, embodiment is vital for a multisensory materiality. The multisensory nature of materiality is emphasised, as: “After all, a material culture that consisted solely of images would be immaterial” (Ibd.: 169). While it has been frequently taken for granted that ours is an ocular-centric society<sup>120</sup>, it might be argued that such a diagnosis tends to confirm what it pretends to question. Thus, we may ask whether the visual sense was not already important in pre-modern times and whether it has truly outdone the other senses in cultural significance. By pointing to the role of vision in antique philosophy and Christianity as well as by asserting that “the non-visual senses remained important even as vision became more muscular” (Smith, M., 2007: 32) this case can be made. As can be the one for the sense that comes close second after vision in the literature on the senses: “Hearing and sound remained critical to the elaboration of modernity” (Op. cit.: 48). And, we may add, of course hearing was critical for Christianity, too, given its belief that ‘faith comes from hearing’. And so it is not to images but to sounds that we turn now.

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<sup>119</sup> Although it is not one of his explicit topics, this is pointed out by Thomas F. O’Meara (1985) in his speculations about a text by Martin Heidegger: “Bells alert, define but say nothing. They sound out not merely the chronology of hours but contribute to the ‘fugue’ of natural and liturgical times ... the bells, as they mark existence, disclose Being ... Time, the counterpart to Being, is obviously the mystery as well as the gift of the bell tower ... The bell tower makes us at home in a fragile, fleeting world through the sounds which ring on even as they drift away towards the high ranges of the ultimate mystery, Being” (O’Meara, 1985: 130, 131, 132, 133).

<sup>120</sup> The general thesis of western ocular-centrism has been disputed on the grounds that some western societies have been less inclined to privilege sight and the visual. Martin Jay (1986: 198, fn. 15), for example, has pointed to the case of Germany as an exception. In developing his argument, he states that “the hermeneutic tradition dating back to the Reformation, with its stress on the word of God, has always privileged hearing and speech over sight, a bias still evident in contemporary thinkers like Gadamer and Habermas”.



### *From the Church Bell to the Factory Bell*

In a ballad that generations of German pupils have had to learn by heart, Friedrich Schiller described the manufacturing process of the particular piece of material culture this part of our explorations is concerned with: the bell. The significance of Schiller's text has been grasped by Alain Corbin (1999: 289), who credits it and its author with having "established stereotypes of campanarian [bell-related, sc. AF] literature that were to remain in place for over half a century". Far from these stereotypes, bells have been, in fact, functional for the 'dictatorship of punctuality' (Treiber/Steinert, 2005: 38 et seq.). Bells are means for manufacturing reliable humans. Of course, the historical origins of bells by far predate these early (or earlier) as well as our late capitalist contexts. If we take a look at the history of bells with Percival Price (1983), we find early artefacts in ancient China, India, Egypt, and Iran. Still, the question when the first bell was ever rung – if one would consider such a question meaningful – appears to be impossible to answer. A Christian precursor to the church bell is to be found in 'holy boards'. These were wooden boards struck with a hammer. They were, for example, used at the council of Nicaea in 325 CE. Christian itinerant preachers in those times caught people's attention by hand-bells. The church-tower bell probably came from Africa; we find evidence of it in sixth-century Carthage and Alexandria. The first reference to a bell-rope dates back to 585 CE. Monasteries needed bells to structure their daily routines. For them and later lay parishes, bells performed a multiplicity of functions: They called to service and announced the liturgy of the hours as well as changes from work to prayer and back again for the monastics; beyond this realm of life, they called to mass, weddings, informed about the birth of a child as well as the dying (Passing Bell) and death (Death Knell) of a community's soul; and they marked the church seasons. In Roman Catholic regions, bells were rung on All Souls' Day starting at midnight and frequently sounding until dawn (Op. cit.: 115).

In medieval times it was believed that bells – as some sort of 'material of salvation' – would keep away bad weather. This apotropaic view of bells was conjoined with a demonological motif, strongly objected to by Martin Luther. In his writing on councils and churches, he rejected the commonly held belief that bells would exorcise the devils from the weather (Angenendt, 2000: 393). Bells were also rung for the benefit of the

dying to lend support to their souls, and they reminded those not quite yet on their deathbeds of their mortality. The practice of ringing an *Avemaria* for the dead after lunch and dinner must have made those listening to the chiming bells choke. Or this is at least the impression one gets from reading Piero Camporesi's (1988: 71 et seq.) interpretation of this practice:

"The clanging of 'sacred bronze' impinges disturbingly on the private world, and the network of city belfries of the Post-Tridentine era becomes a contrivance for suggestive psychological conditioning, a mechanism for inflexible control. Pleasure in food is dolefully transformed, if not indeed destroyed, by the inexorable pealing of bells ... The bipolarity of taste/disgust epitomizes that of liking for/dislike of life, and the bitter and neurotic bulimia of the Post-Tridentine age."

Were the bells a stable presence in the lives of lay people, for those living in monasteries they have been omnipresent: Reminiscing on her time as a nun, Monica Baldwin (1979: 83) remembers how the cloister bell announced a change of activity. This announcement was immediately to be complied with. If a nun continued to do what she had been doing at the time, this was considered an act of disobedience: The subject in question did 'disobey the first sound of the bell'. The nuns in Suzanne Campbell-Jones's (1979: 96) study were woken by a bell at five-thirty in the morning. And this was not the only sound of the bell: In the account of one of her nun respondents' about the daily structure of their lives, one statement recurs frequently to mark the different elements of activity undertaken by the members of the community: "then a bell rang" (Op. cit.: 98). The constant – well, at least frequently recurring – sounding of bells also figures in Odile Arnold's historical study of nuns: Whereas the bell rang almost all the time in the nineteenth-century monastic context analysed, now it has disappeared from our *horizons sonores* (Arnold, 1984: 43). In some of the novitiates back then the bell was heard every half-hour to mark a change of activity. Sensitive 'souls' and their ears will probably perceive ringing at such frequencies as permanent ringing.

Like Arnold's, so is Alain Corbin's (1999) study on *Village Bells* concentrating on 19<sup>th</sup>-century France. Yet, he is not interested in nuns but in the 'auditory landscape' of the time. Bells, we learn, formed a crucial part of this landscape, and their ringing even "constituted a language and founded a system of communication that has gradually broken down" (Op. cit.: xix). Bells and the towers they were kept in were matters of

conflict<sup>121</sup> and issues of self-assertion for different groups, too. Furthermore, those ringing the instruments contributed to the aestheticisation of day-to-day living. They reminded those hearing the sounds of the social hierarchies they lived in, which were also reflected in inscriptions on the bronze, but also conveyed a sense of equality to them, due the sharing of daily rhythms. Women were excluded from the task of ringing, “except in nunneries” according to the doctrine pointed out by an eighteenth-century priest. Not only who was eligible for bell-ringing, but the very practice itself was gendered. We can infer this from Arnold van Gennep’s study on folklore, in which he observed that male children to be baptised were given preferential treatment over female ones; for the boys the bells were rung longer, the great rather than the small bell (that one was for girls) was used for them, and a different style of ringing was applied (s. Corbin, 1999: 164).

Bells became sacred objects, particularly so after they had been ceremonially blessed, a rite often likened to baptism. In the historical course of this, the bell was personified and in need of a Godfather or Godmother to be properly christened. People may have even gone so far as refusing to accept a bell without these arrangements being carried out (Op. cit.: 90); this is certainly an extreme example for the personification of bells. This personification also becomes apparent in Price’s (1983: 128) fascinating examples for the *Virtutes*, or virtues, ascribed to a bell. And not only were the bells credited with these virtues, they were made to proclaim defending them themselves. Inscriptions in Latin have the bells ‘speaking’ in the first person singular. One of these would inform the reader: “Excito lentos” – “I arouse the lazy” (Ibd.).

The protective functions of bells were important to the community. It was a commonly shared belief that disease- and disaster-spreading demons feared the sounds of bells and avoided them and their communities. On the positive side, it was thought that bells could summon angels (Corbin, 1999: 102). The episcopal elite came to reinterpret the more magic aspects of this religious imagination; instead of believing in some miracle-producing qualities inherent in the metallic material, they now came to see the sound of the bell as an invitation to prayer (Op. cit.: 105 et seq.). This anti-magic turn was, of

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<sup>121</sup> For a more recent account of how bells and bell-ringing were employed in the conflict of a community, see Palumbo’s (2004) account of two factions grouped around two churches in a Sicilian town. His interpretation of the conflict concentrates on meaning and values: “*To ring or not ring the bells of one church or another in a particular ritual occasion, to allow or not to allow public viewing of a sacred image, to choose the church for the baptism of a child or for a funeral; these may seem to be insignificant ceremonial details from the outside, but in reality they are actions with specific political meanings and with high emotional value*” (Op. cit.: 6; Italics AF).

course, shared by the Protestant Reformers. We have already mentioned Luther's reserve in that respect. He also felt that the custom of 'baptising' bells meant nothing else but the profanation of baptism as a sacrament (see: Price, 1983: 129). At least from the end of the nineteenth century onwards, Alain Corbin assumes a decline in bell-related activities caused by different processes:

"The desacralizing of space and time, the revolution in means of communication, the destructuring of rural society brought about by mass exodus and recomposition in terms of new equilibria, and the imposition of unfamiliar aesthetic codes together meant that the attention paid to bells gradually ceased to be a relevant index of collective sensibilities" (Corbin, 1999: 43).

Bell and clock became rivals, a process Jacques Le Goff has dated back to fourteenth century Florence and France. The material, auditory rivals represent different concepts of time, and this rivalry can be interpreted as a struggle between "the continuous measured, precise time of the clock, and the marking through bell ringing of a few privileged moments in the year, the week and the day, the repetition of which served to anchor the sense of immobile time" (Le Goff, 1977b: 110). Secular bell ringing was committed to the former, historically later, idea. In such a secularising context, Corbin (1999: 131) mentions the de-sacralising of getting up in the morning; the spread of the originally aristocratic habit of rising late in towns. The dawn bell was now felt to be unwelcome, as it interrupted one's nightlife activities. Night-ringing, disliked by townspeople, was perceived as a problem in the countryside as well, where sleepers would be awakened by it. A right to sleep was, in whatever rudimentary form, formulated in this context. Using the contested vocabulary of secularisation theory, Corbin reaches a conclusion about the decline of the bells and an incipient ocular-centrism going hand in hand:

"The disenchantment of the world and the desacralizing of life and the environment somehow disqualified the act of listening to bells. Bells had gradually stopped being signs, portents, or talismans. Dechristianization caused the withdrawal within oneself enjoined by their calls to prayer to be forgotten ... In the nineteenth century, posters, printed summonses, the dials of private clocks, and calendars gradually ensured the predominance of the visual" (Corbin, 1999: 307).

This statement echoes Weber's diagnosis of the disenchantment of the world that he saw as having been started in Israelite prophecy and Hellenistic science and then later fully come into its own in Calvinism.

## *Watching the Silent Monitor and Being Watched by It*

We can trace the gradual turn to the visual in a most peculiar piece of material culture, the “Silent Monitor”. You may come across one, if you visit the heritage village of New Lanark in Scotland by the river Clyde. The village is dominated by the cotton mills, which now harbour a visitors’ centre, a clothes shop, and a luxurious hotel, yet there is also a slightly less luxurious youth hostel occupying a former millworkers’ house. In addition to numerous other shopping opportunities, souvenirs relating to the history of the place and its most famous figure, Robert Owen (1771-1858)<sup>122</sup>, may be purchased. One of the articles on sale is a wooden replica of the “Silent Monitor”, the device invented by Owen in order to discipline his workers. While this is sold for educational purposes, one wonders what sort of attitude it is intended to instil in those being educated in this way today.

In Owen’s days the purpose was clear. In front of each worker a Silent Monitor was hung. The sides had different colours: black, blue, yellow, and white. Each side represented a certain type of behaviour. This was assessed each day by the supervisor and consequently the worker had to face the colour that was determined for him. In this signifying system black represented behaviour deemed bad, blue stood for indifferent behaviour, yellow was good, and white – in a somewhat inherited symbolism – meant excellent. The ‘books of character’ kept for the workers were filled with notes about the colour of each day. Through this form of disciplining Owen felt he could do away with corporal punishment to which he objected. Ironically, the means to do so has been picked up on by his critics as an authoritarian tool. Owen observed a marked improvement in his workers’ performance resulting from the introduction of the wooden piece. As a happy outcome, most workers pretty soon came to see the favourable colours rather than the unfavourable ones (Owen 1993).

Owen’s invention, possibly borrowed from the Quaker pedagogue Joseph Lancaster (Donnachie, 2000: 81 et seq.) presents a clear case of an *intended* secularisation of discipline. This is rather evident in the ‘books of character’ that were kept. Owen

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<sup>122</sup> The author of this study analysed the ambivalence of religion in Owen’s thought in her Master’s thesis, in which the Silent Monitor occurs but plays only a marginal role. In re-reading it, I have found how the earlier study presaged the present one and its conditions of academic production: That the interdisciplinary study of religion deals with the social world, which disciplines those who are disciplined by their (subject) disciplines, and that the study of religion, although to a much lesser degree, acts back on this very same social world in a disciplining manner. For an overview of my Marxian perspective on Owen and Religion see: Finger 2007.

himself acknowledged that he had taken the idea from Christianity, a religious tradition he was very much at odds with otherwise. The idea according to which each individual would have to face his/her deserved fate as a consequence of the registered good and bad deeds one had done during one's lifetime seems to have fascinated him. Now, of course, it was not God or an angel anymore who kept the records, but the factory owner or the supervisor. Also, the decision had been brought forward and transformed into a plurality of decisions: Not at the end of the days, but today and every day one had to watch the black, blue, yellow, or white.

Furthermore, one was as much watched by the Silent Monitor as one watched it. Hanging permanently close to one, the device performed the function of a substitute for the supervisor. While the latter's eyes could not be on every single worker in the mill all the time, the Monitor was there to stay. The synchronicity of watching and being watched is an imperfect one, though. The worker watches what has been decreed to be his/her fate for the day, a *fait accompli*. The Silent-Monitor-cum-supervisor, on the other hand, watches the worker in order to decree his/her fate; i.e. to change the colour or leave it as is.

The Silent Monitor was celebrated as progress by its proponents. And it was at least in one respect: Fear of hell<sup>123</sup> was not encouraged by the philanthropic mill-owner (which, of course, is not to say that his workers had ceased being affected by it). From this visual device let us now proceed to a much more widespread auditory one, the factory bell. From watching and being watched let us move back to the inescapability of sound, and let us move on to the disciplining culture materialised in the factory bell.

### *The Ringing of the Factory Bell*

In spite of the valuable criticism levelled against the material-culture-as-text approach, it may still be permissible to study texts on material culture that are close to the

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<sup>123</sup> It had been most vivid in the world of the Methodist workers and the vigilance they were subjected to, according to E. P. Thompson (1991: 406): "Not only 'the sack' but also the flames of hell might be the consequence of indiscipline at work. God was the most vigilant overlooker of all. Even above the chimney breast 'Thou God Seest Me' was hung".

material in question. A text close to the experience of the factory bell is the following anonymous ballad:

“Oh, happy man, oh happy thou  
While toiling at the spade and plough,  
While thou amidst they pleasures roll,  
All at they labour uncontroll'd  
While at the mills in pressing crowds  
Where high build chimneys puff black clouds  
And all around the slaves do dwell,  
Who are called to labour by a Bell.

You have just got time to eat and sleep  
A man is set your time to keep;  
And if you chance to come too late,  
You're mark'd on paper or on slate  
No matter e'er what be the cause,  
You must abide by their own laws,  
All the time you draw your wage  
For coming late there's so much charged”  
(*The Factory Bell*, anon. ca. 1830's).

This literary text draws a stark contrast between the pleasures of agricultural work and the toils of factory discipline. The workers have become slaves under this new regime, “slaves to t’ factory bell” as William Baron, who worked in a cotton mill in Blackburn, Lancashire, from childhood days on, put it in a poem. While the ocular discipline of the Silent Monitor should not be underestimated in terms of the subtlety with which it enforces the Eliasian *Zwang zum Selbstzwang*, the coercion towards self-coercion, the auditory discipline of the factory bell appears far harsher in comparison. It is part and parcel of the capitalist time-discipline analysed by E. P. Thompson (1967) and, partly revising him, Paul Glennie and Nigel Thrift (1996). As such it is just one element in a range of timing practices, such as clocking-in for work and clocking-out again, and secondary practices ensuring that time is kept, such as the wage deductions referred to in the text quoted. The prevalence of the factory bell in working-class literature is striking. It indicates that this piece of material culture was perceived intensely as a sign for the change of times. It indicated the victory of clock time with its tyranny of the clock, deplored by anarchist George Woodcock and others, a tyranny that defines time as a commodity and has the humans, who become like clocks, equally commodified and controlled. Not always were the related changes simply accepted: Factory bells

were destroyed or stolen by outraged, obviously not yet successfully disciplined, workers.

In the factory bell, the new discipline crystallises itself. One can point at it, like at the other time-keeping devices, but much more than that: One hears its sound and cannot escape it – at least once its regime has started working. Like the church bell covering a community's territory, the factory bell covers its territory, the factory. Those who escape its ringing illegitimately for a while have to pay dearly for their misdemeanour, literally. The bell as a real symbol of the discipline of clock-time, however, pre-dates industrialisation. Jacques Le Goff (1977a) mentioned the bells of Aire-sur-la-Lys which were, from as early as 1355, endorsed by the authorities to mark the hours of trade and labour, indicative of a rationalising as well as secularising (Goff's original French term is 'laïciser') time. This time, the time of the merchant and the craftsman has a price. It is more exact and precisely measured than the ecclesiastical time, which it comes to replace, had been. The new time is the time of the clocks, "utilisable pour les besognes profanes et laïques" (Op. cit.: 76). Church time was not completely abolished though, according to Le Goff. It lived on as an additional horizon of sin and grace added to the way of the new time in which he lived his professional life. Natural time, professional time, and supernatural time are thus separate as well as meeting each other. The merchant's professional and religious times clash and contradict each other, and he has to come to terms with it, even though he has to pay the price both mentally as well as practically. Le Goff (1977b) gives other examples of *Werkglocken* in fourteenth century France. Employers introduced them to fight their workers' cheating – or so they said. This was done especially in the textile industry, which through its being vulnerable came to pioneer this 'progress' in the organisation of work. We are also told of protests and rebellions against the new time-keepers at the time and the textile bourgeoisie's zeal in protecting its bells. We are not to strictly oppose religious and secular (or: 'laïc') time<sup>124</sup>: Sometimes both types of bells co-existed, for which the city of York is cited as an example. This example is far from arbitrary, if we follow Le Goff's (1977b: 74) lead, which recapitulates a theme we are by now familiar with: "l'Église a été l'initiatrice. Le milieu monastique surtout ... a été le grand maître de *l'emploi du temps*" (It., Or.). The state is another factor to reckon with,

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<sup>124</sup> Recent scholarship has departed from strict dichotomies such as natural vs. social time or clock time vs. task-orientated time. Wolfgang Reinhard, for example, (2004: 584.) states that in most, if not all, cultures we find both elements of what have been called pre-modern, i.e. qualitative and cyclical, and modern, i.e. quantitative and linear, concepts of time.



since Charles V. rules that all Parisian bells have to be set after the Palais Royale one. In this decree Le Goff discovers the royal reader of Aristotle as domesticator of rationalised time. This time will come to bear a price tag, when with the wake of the Renaissance the tabou on time as God's gift is lifted, time itself becomes a good to be sold and bought – until the complexity of the relation between the two is reduced to the utmost in Franklin's 'Time is money', although it already was in Cavalca's treatises in the fourteenth century according to Le Goff (1977b: 77).

As Erhard Chvojka informs us (1997) the church tower clock was widespread in rural communities at the end of sixteenth-century Britain, and the European continent followed suit, albeit at a slower pace and against some resistance. In the following two centuries, the middle-European rural population came into the habit of having clocks in their cottages and pocket watches to carry on them. The latter were given to boys on the occasion of their being confirmed in church; the girls were only allowed to stare and wonder at the miracle of the grandfather's watch, which conferred power and status to the one who carried it. That clock-time was sometimes used by workers against their masters, can be surmised from the bishop of Durham's 1680 complaint about agricultural day labourers, who immediately abandon the task they happen to be working on when they hear the clock announcing break time or the end of their work day (s. Chvojka, 1997: 306). It seems as if they have left behind the traditional task orientation. Yet, from a sociological point of view, we can also take this example to show that time consciousness and its norms have to be understood within a framework of power relations: The Durham labourers may be sympathetically viewed as subverting the system from within, but the terms and conditions of clock-time are ultimately beyond their reach. Furthermore, we should not forget that the Durham case is constructed by an interested party, a bishop disapproving of what he perceives as the labourers' sloth, a perception that has been shaped by moral presuppositions about the factual qualities of which we can only speculate.

Turning back from the fields to the factory, we do have plenty of evidence that the discipline of the factory bell was not welcomed by those who were to be its subjects. In his *Condition of the Working Class in England*, Engels (1958) mentions the plight of the Leicester stocking-weavers and quotes a commissioner that they are nevertheless proud of their being free from the factory bell that would allot them the time for eating, sleeping and working. An altogether different situation of people free

from the factory bell is those of the unemployed. The Marienthal study carried out by Marie Jahoda and her collaborators in the early 1930s Austrian village of that name is a case in point. According to this study one of the effects of unemployment was the loss of a structured sense of time. One of its signs was men idling about and doing everything at a small pace. The moral assumptions about the necessity of paid work underlying this analysis have been criticised recently, and the link between sleep, rest, lying in bed and shame has been given a new twist:

"Jahoda et al. express mock surprise when they write 'spending a long time in bed ... is apparently felt to be in some way shameful' ... There's nothing 'apparent' about it. It is obvious because that shame derives from the moral discourse that is both being described and reproduced by Jahoda et al." (Cole, 2007: 1142).

It is the same sort of discourse praising productive activity that has been materialised by the bells. On the way from the church to the factory bell the currency has changed: One does not pay in prayer anymore, but in labour. That is the currency paid in by those who have nothing to sell but their labour. From Marx it is but a short step again to Friedrich Engels and his remarks on the move from home manufacturing to the factory system in fustian cutting: The cutter cannot choose his working hours freely anymore and is dominated by the factory bell. Nowadays, smaller segments of the population are employed in labour contexts characterised by a factory bell; not many punch the clock at work these days. Our vigil/ance, on the job and in our leisure time, is ensured by other devices. A partial reversal of the collectivisation brought about by the factory bell may be detected in the alarm clock. Are not most of us – more or less – happily individualised owners and users of (at least) one or of one of its functional equivalents?

### *From Alarm Clock to Clocky?*

In this paragraph I would like to introduce a possible new development in the material culture produced and employed to make us get up. The conventional alarm clock does not seem to do its job properly. The temptation of just switching it off and falling back into sleep is just too great. This, of course, tends to interfere with the requirements the disciplines of time and sleep impose on us. Yet, help is near at hand, in the form of a new device ensuring its user really gets up: S/he has to find the thing to stop it. We will

ponder the implications of this ingenuous device, but shall first take a brief look at the alarm clock as we know it.

### *The Alarm Clock*

Like with the first bell that was ever rung, it is difficult to tell when the first clock was invented – because what precisely counts as a clock is a contested issue<sup>125</sup>. As for the meaning of the clock, Freud proposed to see it as a, we might say: material, symbol. He stressed its symbolising the female genitalia, because of its being related to periodic occurrences and intervals. After all, women prided themselves on their menstruating with the regularity of clock-work. One of his female patients felt disturbed in her sleep by the ticking of clocks and kept them out of her reach at night-time. For Freud, this was a manifestation of her erection anxiety, as the ticking of the clock equals the pulsing of the clitoris in a state of sexual excitement (Freud, 2000: 266 et seq.). A clock, usually, has to be wound, and it is this act of winding that Schopenhauer likened to sleep and its function for human life. He apparently did not have the uses in mind that slave-owners in the American South put clocks and clock-time to. Clock-time<sup>126</sup> was used on the slaves to make them compliant with the owners' demands in a way that remarkably differed from the disciplining Thompsonian workers experienced. While they could, at times, insist on negotiating for better working conditions, such an appeal was out of the question for the American slaves. The latter were physically forced into 'time obedience', while their European fellow humans internalised 'time discipline' (Smith, M., 1997: 15 et seq.). And of course, part and parcel of this time discipline has been sleep discipline. Clock time still very much defines our contemporary time consciousness, with efficiency, budgeting and management measures having emerged out of this manner of conceptualising time (Adam, 1995: 52). Some have seen an evolutionary progression in the history of organising time, including time for sleep.

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<sup>125</sup> This is emphasised by Glennie/Thrift (2005), whose article is worth consulting for an overview of "Chronologies of Timekeeping 'Revolutions' from 1200 to 1900". For the history of clocks in general see: Landes 2000.

<sup>126</sup> Smith, M. (1997) argues against the strict opposition of clock time and natural time and holds both to be complementing each other as well as sacred time into the nineteenth century, not only in the area he is considering, which is the American South. On different concepts of time, including 'body time', from a perspective of social theory, see: Adam (1995), who also backs up the point about the complementarity of natural and clock time, when she writes that "contemporary Western life continues to be conducted *in* time, that is, in the variable times of seasonal and diurnal cycles as well as in the objectified, rationalized time of calendars and clocks" (Op. cit.: 87; It. Or.).

They tell us that in simple societies people sleep when they feel tired, at a higher level they sleep at night, and at further levels they submit themselves to the discipline of agricultural and later industrial work. In such a model (Elias 1984) the idea that coercion is transformed into self-coercion, an idea to which I subscribe, is presented as evolutionary progress/ion, a presentation I beg to differ from.

What a contrast to this is shown by the image Walter Benjamin (1977: 279) presents us with in his fifteenth thesis on history: How a revolutionary consciousness of history is one of time disrupted. Here, the time of history differs from clock time, as the idea of Messianic time differs from individual time. To Benjamin, the calendar of the French revolution was meant to commemorate and not to count time like clocks and watches<sup>127</sup> did. It is this revolutionary consciousness that Benjamin sees at work in the July revolutionaries who shot the clock towers.

Regarding the history of the alarm clock more definite time markers can be detected: As we have already seen in chapter 6, it was the purpose of redeeming more time that inspired the English Puritan Ralph Thoresby to invent an early alarm clock in 1680 (Ekirch, 2006: 264). Even earlier efforts were made in Germany. Wright (2004: 205) mentions the invention of an alarm clock lighting a candle by Carovagius in about 1500 and notes that this device has been reinvented several times. Yet, it took until the 1870s that small bedside alarm clocks reached the markets, first manufactured in the US and Germany. In Victorian England the alarm clock was to be found in the quarters of the servants, and it was referred to as the ‘servants’ regulator’ (Wright, 2004: 281). The 1930s saw the introduction of the chime alarm. One of these clocks, made by an American company, was called “Big Ben”, and the way its third series was advertised for then in *Collier’s* magazine (Big Ben 1931) is most instructive. It was presented as “The First Polite Alarm Clock in History” and praised for having “amazing new features that make him [!] almost human”. He does not tick, and therefore guarantees a good night’s sleep, and then he is “polite – yet firm – in the morning”. Not only the auditory sense, but also the visual one was provided with alarms. Light was used as a waking stimulant by the ‘silent alarm clock’. At the set time its frame would flash and thus waken the sleeper without disturbing the partner. One had, however, to face the clock for this to happen. Improvements on the product that made the light brighter would also affect the sleeping partner (Coren, 1997: 21). The promise of natural light is used

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<sup>127</sup> Watches have played an important psychological role in the subjectivation of time and the process in which an individual consciousness has formed itself (Le Goff, 1977b: 76, fn. 47).

today to promote visual alarm clocks. This alerts us to the fact that vigil/ance is not only determined by soundscapes but also by lightscares, in which researchers in material culture have become increasingly interested.

In their book on the production of reliable humans, Treiber and Steinert (2005), have also something to say about alarm clocks. They are concerned with the conditions of social organisation that made these devices first of all possible and list five of them:

1. The beginning of day is timed ahead, irrespective of how recreated the alarm clock user is.
2. This beginning of day is at a time when one cannot be completely sure to wake up by oneself, which means it is a time when one is not yet well rested.
3. The private nature of the alarm clock indicates the separation of living and working quarters.
4. There is not any standardised beginning of day binding for each and everyone.
5. The alarm clock tells us something about night-time commitments or other activities, which delay one's going to bed. While the morning is usually claimed by work, evening and night are dedicated to private affairs (Treiber/Steinert, 2005: 49).

Particularly the first two points are revealing in terms of how sleep discipline and vigil/ance are built into the, usually small, artefact. Of course, an alarm clock is not necessarily used to wake one up. One might set the alarm in order not to miss a certain point in time during waking hours, for example the beginning of one's favourite television series. Nevertheless, the primary function of an alarm clock is to put an end to one's sleep, ideally in a way that is "firm – but polite" as the advertisement had it.

The point about privatisation might very well be extended to encompass the privatisation of sleep itself and another separation that comes into play besides the one of living and working quarters. One's living quarters tend to be internally separated as well, into those one spends one's waking life in and those one sleeps in, typically a bedroom. Of course, this does not apply to students who only have a bedsit to live in. And it definitely does not apply to the homeless, either. Nevertheless, this separation of living and working quarters – where it is in place – is certainly not marked by rigid boundaries: One may sleep on a sofa in the living room or on one's desk and do other things than sleep in one's bedroom. However, the still existing internal separation of

one's living quarters is reinforced by current sleep advice. One of the standard recommendations for getting sufficient and restful sleep is to keep distractions out of the bedroom.

The lack of a standard concerning when to start one's day hints at variations in sleep times: When one falls asleep, when one wakes up and how many hours one sleeps are all variable. Finally, the point about night-time activities reminds us that we do not only forgo sleep for business but also for pleasure. Has my recurring point about sleep discipline therefore turned invalid? I do not think so. This is not intended to degenerate into a critique of the pleasures one might choose over the pleasure of sleep. However, in summarising the points raised by Treiber and Steinert, I have – consciously, I admit it – omitted what they talk about in a bracket added to the private evening of no. 5: “the appertaining industry that is organising private time and using it for its purposes<sup>128</sup>” (Ibd.).

Yet, maybe the whole underlying question is put wrongly. In response: Why should we at all give up one pleasure for another? The assumption that we should and even have to rests on an economic model transposed to the realm of pleasures, the scarcity of pleasures. Anyway, I suppose that the numbers of those deriving pleasure from being woken up by the sound of an alarm clock – possibly in the middle of a sleep cycle – are small.

### *“Clocky”: Totally Awake?*

Perhaps getting up to find “Clocky” will be more fun? What is it one would be looking for? The product description on the website (Clocky 2009) devoted to this device reads as follows:

“The patented alarm clock that runs away and hides to get you out of bed. Clocky gives you one chance to get up. But if you snooze, Clocky will jump off your nightstand and wheel around your room looking for a place to hide, beeping all the while. You'll have to get out of bed to silence his alarm. Clocky is kind of like a misbehaving pet, only he will get up at the right time.”

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<sup>128</sup> In context and with the translated part italicised, the German original version reads: “Wenn man zu wenig Schlaf bekommt, heisst das auch, dass der Tag zu kurz ist. Dabei fällt auf, dass der Abend und der Morgen von verschiedenen sozialen Einrichtungen beansprucht werden: der Morgen meist von der Arbeit, der Abend von Privatem (*samt der dazugehörigen Industrie, die die private Zeit organisiert und für ihre Zwecke nützt*)” (Treibert/Steinert, 2005: 49).

Whereas the “Big Ben” alarm clocks of the early 1930s were advertised as being “almost human”, this time piece, outfitted with a furry exterior, resembled an animal in its early design stage. The idea seemed to be to adopt it as a pet: Its human companion was meant to cheer up when finding it (and not throw it out of the window in a fury). The Clocky products on the market now have lost this furry touch; now in chrome and different colours, they look more like toys. Clocky was invented by a graduate student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Lab, who has subsequently started her own company. The new product is “surely the most infuriating wake-up call ever devised” according to the *Guardian’s* science correspondent Ian Sample (2005), who quotes MIT sources saying that the product would be available for less than £15 (or whatever is the equivalent in US dollars). At such a cost, “Clockies” might very well invade many bedrooms sooner or later. With a present cost of \$50 this may still take a while to happen for large parts of the population in North America and elsewhere.

In spite of all the playfulness, it is after all meant to be amusing, like a hide-and-seek game, it might very well be the next step in sleep-disciplinary vigil/ance having long left behind Thoresby’s time-redeeming alarm clock. This step is certainly not going to be the last one, but the level of perfection reached is admirable. In the past people may have been tormented by the sounds of bells – whether from a church or in a factory –, by the watching of and being watched by the Silent Monitor, or by the conventional alarm clock, which people have felt to be not so “polite” and pleasant. Its humanness had to be qualified by an “almost”. “Clocky” does not even attempt to appear as human. While its prototype looked like a cherished pet, it has now lost all resemblance with a sentient being. It is a plaything. Or is it? If it could talk it would probably say: “Embrace vigil/ance wholeheartedly! It’s a pleasure, with no end to it”. No scarcity there.

While Clocky wakes the sleeper to go and find it, earlier devices have been much more hands-on:

“For those whose slumber was sound-proof, Mr. R. W. Savage exhibited his ‘Alarum Bedstead’ at the Crystal Palace in 1851. If the bell was ignored, the bed-clothes were automatically removed. If the sluggard still snored, the mattress slowly tilted up sideways to 45 degrees, leaving him to end his sleep, if he could, on the floor. A variant shown at the Leipzig Fair a few years later was as thorough in its efforts, but coaxed more kindly. Only if a gentle alarm-bell failed did it resort to a loud one. If this too failed, the sleeper’s night-cap was pulled off, and a notice ‘Time To Get Up!’ was thrust under his nose.

Although he was finally tilted out of bed, the assault was followed by the apologetic offer of a cup of hot coffee" (Wright, 2004: 208).

This nineteenth-century device does not sound or act much like a plaything. It lacks the distinctive quality of the game, which the new wake-up toy conveys. In a sense, with sleep discipline having turned into a pleasure, this would be its completion. Thus completely sleep-disciplined and totally awake no one would ever want to switch Clockie's motor off. It is like a hide-and-seek game. True, but who is hiding and who is seeking in this game? Of course, we do not (yet) live in a "clockified" world. And seeing the writing on the wall, or rather in the "Clocky", may seem to be a somewhat misguided application of the material-culture-as-text approach. However, bodies happily controlled and subjected by "Clocky" are not any less controlled and subjected, because they perceive this as pleasure or because they have 'freely' chosen to do so. This remains true, no matter who (God, the factory supervisor, or oneself!) or what (bells, silent monitor, alarm clock, Clocky) is exerting the control, subjection and subjectification. Self-control and self-subjection, if taken seriously, have to be critiqued as forms of control and subjection. Vigil/ance, anyway, is still very much with us, and it is there to stay.



## 9 Sleep Utopian/Dystopian: Fictionalised Wake-Up Calls

"A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing. And when Humanity lands there, it looks out, and, seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realisation of Utopias" (Wilde, 2004: 13).

In his 1891 essay on *The Soul of Man under Socialism*, Oscar Wilde put into words what he hoped for the future: That socialism with its abolition of private property would lead to a new individualism, in which being as opposed to having would flourish. This kind of socialism has an anarchist ring to it, for it entails the end of all government by humans over humans. The quotation on utopia is taken from a paragraph in which Wilde states his belief that technological progress, if made to serve humans and not humans serving technology, would contribute to a better society. He asks whether this expectation is utopian, and then proceeds to declare what he takes the role of utopias to be. Wilde defines their realisation as progress. As a teleological idea/1 of history, the notion of progress has been rightly considered with some scepticism. In Wilde's essay, however, progress appears as a step-by-step process, which is realised through the journey from one utopia to the next. As such, the process never comes to an end: There will always be a new utopia to set sail towards, and another one afterwards. Could we then embark on a journey towards utopias of sleep or forms of utopian sleep?

While the gist of the argument presented in the preceding chapters has been about the continuous grip that sleep discipline/s have had on our lives, this chapter goes out to explore ways in which the dominance of this type of disciplines have been challenged. Contemporary fiction is a fit candidate for such an exploration. At its best, it offers images of reality with a density and intensity that only few sociological texts can muster. At the same time, fiction is free to develop alternatives in a manner unknown to a realistically bound sociology. Thence, from material culture, whose textual qualities are a matter of debate, we arrive at 'proper' texts – although not at the scholarly, academic or news media type of text. It is not the canonical greats, neither Marcel Proust nor Thomas Mann both of whom wrote praisingly about sleep, we are concerned with, but contemporary fiction, as it may add a new twist to the diagnosis of our time. With one exception, I have restricted my selection to such titles in which sleep is the key theme or at least one featuring in the title. There is one collection of short

stories, and the other texts are novels. The panel of assembled authors is truly international: A German, a British, an Italian, a Japanese one, an Austrian, a Frenchman, and two North Americans, to only list those authors we will be mainly concentrating on in this chapter. This list attests to the fact that cultural attention to sleep is spread across the globe these days, at least in those nations deemed developed by many. Whether it is less so in countries that do not fit this description or whether it simply reflects the laws of international publishing is an open question.

If sleep and its celebration have a utopian potential, as I shall argue, contemporary fiction would be the place to discover it in: the topos of utopia, the place of the non-place. Yet, is it necessarily a good place or eu-topia? Or has utopia turned into dystopia? Has the Eichendorffian romantic sleeper, the good-for-nothing to whom “everything, everything was delightful” been replaced by the restless insomniac? Karl Mannheim defined utopian consciousness as one that was not congruent with the being by which it was surrounded (1965: 169); it thus transcends such being. His positive examples are Anabaptist chiliasm, the liberal humanitarian idea, the conservative reactive counter-utopia, and the socialist/communist utopia. With the disappearance of utopias, the human being, now completely congruent with its environment, becomes a mere thing (Op. cit.: 225). In fictional terms, this dehumanisation has featured in dystopias, some of which include sleep technologies: Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* with its technique of ‘Hypnopaedia’, which has been partly realised in “Sleep Learning” programmes<sup>129</sup>, is a case, albeit a fictional one, of the instrumentalisation of sleep about which we have heard so much throughout this study. How sleep has been written about as dystopian or utopian in recent fiction is the topic of this chapter.

Raymond Williams (1997) has distinguished four types of utopian and dystopian fictions: the paradise or hell, and in a positive or a negative mode depending on the utopian or dystopian direction: the externally altered world, the willed transformation, and the technological transformation. The willed transformation is most characteristic of utopian and dystopian fictions. Although he acknowledges that there are exceptions to the rule, Williams (Op. cit.: 209) differentiates between utopias and science fictions: “while the utopian transformation is social and moral, the science-fiction

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<sup>129</sup> The benefits and efficiency of sleep-learning techniques are disputed, however: While there are subtle processes of perception during sleep, ‘learning’ in the narrow sense of the term is impossible during that state (Empson 2003).

transformation, in its dominant Western modes, is at once beyond and beneath: not social and moral but natural.” We shall concentrate here on the utopian social and moral transformations, and their dystopian obverses. First, however, a start with the utopian roots is made.

### *More's Utopia*

Before turning to contemporary fiction, a good starting point for utopian sleep is to be found in the very book that lent its name to a whole way of thinking as well as to a specific, literary genre: Thomas More's *Utopia*. Utopias of this Morean (and Platonean) type are closer to social theory than those of the Baconian, technology-orientated type, which may remind one of science fiction. The latter has come to occupy the utopian ground, so much so that it has been treated as the representative *par excellence* of the utopian genre. Certainly, one could write a story about sleep in science fiction, extending from classical examples (sleep as the medium from the Boston of 1887 to the one of 2000 in Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* is a case in point) to more recent ones<sup>130</sup>. However, this chapter is concerned with the links between literature and social theory rather than technology, which would deserve a study in its own right.

One of the difficulties of interpretation prompted by More's *Utopia* is to what extent it delineates a serious plan for an ideal commonwealth and to what extent the text plays with irony and therefore does not at all recommend what it describes to be actually put into practice. Apart from that, attention has been drawn to the fact that More's own political doings were remarkably unaffected by the life he led, as More says: hedonistic, Utopians are leading. On the other hand and by modern-day standards, some aspects of this life do not seem to be that idyllic or desirable either: Slaves are held, women are subject to their husbands as are children to their parents, and suicides whose acts of leaving this life have not been socially sanctioned do not get a burial. The alleged hedonism is limited in everyday life by a class of people whose duty is to make sure that “no one sits around in idleness and ... that everyone works hard at his trade” (More, 1992: 37). This limitation is qualified at once, when it is said that Utopians know of no unnecessary labour and long working hours. Instead, they only work for six hours

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<sup>130</sup> See, for example, Steinberg (2008), who takes US American author Nancy Kress's *Beggars* trilogy, which tells the story of a genetically modified class of sleepless people, to read sleep through science fiction and discovers embodiments of both utopian as well as dystopian desires.

a day. It is in this context of work ethics that rest and sleep come into play. After having worked for three hours in the morning, the Utopians go for lunch and before there is another three hours of work they enjoy an extended break: “After lunch they rest for a couple of hours” (Ibd.). Utopian society seems to be a siesta culture, but then again we do not know whether this ‘rest’ means, or at least includes, sleep or not. The waking Utopians may use those hours they do not spend asleep, by eating and working at their own discretion – provided, though, they are not idling around but keep themselves busy. A preferred mode of such busyness is the attendance of lectures “before daybreak” [!]<sup>131</sup> (Ibd.). A Utopian citizen comes to these well-rested, since s/he has just had eight hours of sleep. Robert M. Adams comments on this timetable:

“if the Utopians work six hours a day and sleep eight, they have ten hours a day free for eating and leisure. But More has done something to mitigate the dangers of this leisure by allocating most of it to the early morning hours. If they go to bed at eight, as he says, and sleep eight hours, the Utopians will rise at four A.M. Work does not start till nine. There may be problems with this timetable, but boredom is only one of them” (More, 1992: 37, fn. 7).

Let us remember that six to eight hours ‘at most’ was the timespan given by Puritan Richard Baxter, so the Utopians find themselves at the upper end of this range, bordering on the impermissible. That they might be plagued by boredom is, of course, a common-sense assumption imposed on the text. Happily busy Utopians would not surrender to it. Their sleep is a matter of necessity which has the added value of helping digestion. It is ruled by circular regularity. This regularity does not allow for individual differences: The standardised Utopian needs eight hours of sleep, no more, no less, full stop.

If the dystopian imagination would come up with a picture of large-scale sleep-deprivation and its u-/eu-topian counterpart with one of complete freedom to sleep and sleepers, More’s fiction is positioned in the middle ground between these two poles. Of course, it all depends on social context. In a society where markedly less than eight hours per night would be the rule, this land of Utopia would hold a real promise. Still, the Utopians’ sleep is determined for them, not by them.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> The editor, Robert M. Adams, informs us that the first lecture at Renaissance universities was usually given between five and seven in the morning (More, 1992: fn. 8). Thus the timing of the Utopian lectures might not have come as such a shock to More’s contemporary readers as it does to those of today.

<sup>132</sup> This is, as far as the spatial arrangements of sleep are concerned, also true for the inhabitants of Thomas Campanella’s (1981) *City of the Sun* written in 1602. In this city, the authorities decide who is

From the land of Utopia let us now briefly move to another legendary place-as-non-place, the land of Cockayne, also known as ‘the poor man’s heaven’. Here monastic sleepers do not only have plenty of opportunity to indulge in non-waking life, just as the brothers who indulge in waking life with some nuns do. The sleepers, however, far from being scolded, are even rewarded with a job promotion:

“And the monk that sleepeth best,  
And gives his body ample rest,  
He, God knows, may presently  
Hope an Abbot for to be” (Morton, 1952: 221).

This sounds much more like a u-/eu-topian land of sleep than More’s utopia. Cockayne is free from the bitter insistence on being busy. Yet, it is not that easy to get there. Seven years of an ordeal of penance is what it takes. While the medieval Christian version of the legend quoted was meant as a satire against sloth, in popular imagination the judgmental aspect was turned into a celebratory one (Kumar, 1991: 6). As we have seen, Raymond Williams classified utopian writing according to the processes it drives. In a different vein, Krishan Kumar distinguishes between four different elements of what Utopia is aiming at: design, harmony, hope and desire. For Kumar, it is desire that is most clearly made manifest in Cockayne. To the desires for food and sex he mentions we may add the desire for sleep and agree to his conclusion: “If utopia is longed for, if it promises the escape from toil and suffering, then Cockayne is the ingredient that supplies the essential instinctual charge” (Op. cit.: 18). How far are we, or at least some of us, from this utopia and, more specifically, from its sleep utopian implications? Contemporary fiction tells us that it is quite a long distance from us to there, if it is not a fully-fledged dystopia of sleeplessness that we find ourselves in.

### *(No) Sleep and Work*

A dystopian diagnosis is the answer suggested by a German novel, first published in 2004. Its title sums it up neatly: “We do not sleep” (*Wir schlafen nicht*) (= Rögglä

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to sleep where. The bedrooms as well as the beds are common property. Due to efficient planning, one has to work only for four hours per day. Of course, this does not mean that the rest of the day is for sleep: Studies and other activities are on the agenda.

2006). This novel is based on interviews conducted with consultants, coaches, key account managers, computer programmers and interns. It reads very much like a compilation of these interviews. The respondents all have one thing in common: They do not sleep, or only little: The shortest of naps, spent on the office desk or in the car in a car park, or an hour of “killer sleep” on an airplane – this is all they get. Pretending that they need to catch some fresh air, they go to an empty office nearby, just to get some ten minutes of sleep (Op. cit.: 21). One senior associate recalls a slogan from the mid-nineties: “I can sleep when I’m dead” (35). He adds that he would not necessarily subscribe to it, but he can go for three hours of sleep per night for a couple of days. “You can practise those things” he says and that he admires someone who regularly only needs one hour of sleep. Some of them get by on coffee, energy drinks or the sparkling wine that is offered everywhere at the trade fair they attend. A key account manager claims that one cannot speak of the sanctity of sleep. Those who do so have slept through the last twenty years (178). The company partner talks about experiments in sleep deprivation; yet his job is not one of these experiments and he has freely chosen to be there. The senior associate ponders the reasons why he has been selected for his task at the fair: It must have been his track record – and it is probably known that he does hardly sleep anymore (179). The company partner mentions that over the years he got used to his insomnia and it has become just a part of normal life, although his perception is distorted sometimes.

In his Tanner Lectures, Axel Honneth (2008: 73; 93, fn. 100) has pondered the issue of “personal self-reification”, by which term he understands “ways in which we experience our feelings and desires as thing-like entities”. As an example for the literary trend of portraying people “who expend a great deal of energy fabricating strategically convenient motives and needs” he referred to Röggl’s book. What is fabricated here, as far as sleep is concerned, is the need *not* to sleep or one of only minimal sleep. It is much more a denial or negation of sleep needs, rather than a positive construct of one.

An altogether different literary perspective on issues of work and sleep can be gleaned from George Orwell’s *Down and out in Paris and London*. Presenting more a piece of journalism than one of fiction, he is reflecting on his work as a *plongeur*, that is a dishwasher, in a Parisian restaurant and, in the process, singles out sleep as being most important to those leading such a life of drudgery:

“Work in the hotel taught me the true value of sleep, just as being hungry had taught me the true value of food. Sleep had ceased to be a mere physical necessity; it was something voluptuous, a debauch more than a relief” (Orwell, 1940: 91).

The two worlds of work we encounter in Rögglä’s and Orwell’s writings respectively, differ starkly in terms of social class and prestige. In both worlds, sleep is a scarce resource. Yet, while the German business people have fully internalised an ideology of sleeplessness, to the dishwasher in Paris sleep offers an opportunity of escape. This escape clearly has erotic connotations. Sleep itself figures here as the working man’s heaven.

From these two examples, of work without sleep on the one hand and sleep as the only respite from work on the other hand, let us now turn to a fictional world in which sleep has become something to work on.

#### *The Fictional Sleep Clinic: Working on Sleep*

British author Jonathan Coe’s (1998) *The House of Sleep* tells the stories of several peoples’ lives in six parts, each designated as a stage in the sleep process from being awake to REM sleep. The book chapters are set alternately in 1983-4 and 1996. The ‘House of Sleep’, we are told, was a student hall of residence in the 1980s and is a sleep clinic in the 90s, and the characters are all linked to this place somehow. The following paragraph deals with the thoughts of the sleep physician, who runs the clinic and is therefore chiefly in charge of working on sleep:

“His career, his work, his reputation, the very continuation of his researches at the Dudden Clinic were all under threat. The forces massed against him – forces of ignorance, of jealousy, of reaction – were starting to mobilize. The conspiracy was gathering pace. All this had become clear to Dr Dudden during the night, which he had spent energetically pacing the London streets. He had not slept a wink, and he felt better for it; in fact, he was quite sure, this morning, that he would never want to sleep again. His lips curled in an involuntary sneer as he looked around the train carriage and saw how many of the passengers were already – so early in the day! – either dozing, or napping, or nodding off, or snoozing, or snatching forty winks, their mouths hanging stupidly open, their heads lolling, their eyelids drooping heavily. Did these people have no sense of dignity, no self-respect? Did they hate life so much that they had to shut themselves off from it at every opportunity?” (Coe, 1998: 312).

The one who speaks thus, Dr Dudden, is a self-declared enemy of sleep. His professional aim is its abolition. His world-view is one of relentless, ceaseless activism. Dozing, Napping, Nodding off, and so on are all types of impermissible behaviour to his mind. There are many names for this loss of awareness, many secular “sins”, against which Dudden stems the weight of his work and life. A hate of life is the major vice in this perspective: It is not permitted to take a break from this life, to temporarily retreat from this world. And: It is surreptitiously assumed that people could do other than what happens to them, which is: falling asleep. Dudden has been interested in watching sleep for a long time. In student days he had enjoyed monitoring his girlfriend Sarah’s sleep, “while he, the watching subject, retained full control over his waking mind” (Op. cit.: 18). Ultimately, the quest for sleeplessness is one for power. Sarah turns out to be a narcoleptic, who cannot distinguish dream from waking life experiences, and is nicknamed Rip van Winkle.

Terry, another character who is a patient in Dudden’s clinic, recalls that he loved sleeping as a student and preferred this to being awake due to the pleasant dreams he would have. By contrast, sleep enemy Dudden praisingly refers to Margaret Thatcher’ habit of three or four hours’ sleep a day. In his view, sleep is weakness. He agrees with Terry that sleep is ‘the great leveller’, yet not without qualifying this: “Like fucking socialism” (Op. cit.: 177), a movement he is apparently not in favour of. He even goes on to declare sleep as a disease, “the most widespread and life-curtailling disease of all” (Op. cit.: 179). Another patient at the clinic is Maria, a narcoleptic who is looking forward to going back home to her children and husband. She is suffering from cataplexy, muscular weakness, which is a symptom characteristic of narcolepsy. In Maria’s case it manifests itself in laughter, and people around her try to make her laugh. Funny as it is for them, it is tiring for Maria, who tries to “cut down on my laughter” (Coe, 1998: 246). On the other hand, she seems to have accepted her condition: “Well, it’s a way of life with me, isn’t it? Always has been. I’ve always loved a laugh. I mean, how do you get through life otherwise? You’ve got to laugh to survive ...” (Ibd.). This accepting attitude contrasts with Dudden’s activism and urge for control: His working on sleep is actually working against sleep.

### *Insomniac Day-Dreams of Sleep*



While Dudden's problem is how to get rid of sleep, another fictional character has got the opposite problem, one shared by many non-fictional contemporaries: "My main problem, my true problem is that I can't ever get to sleep" says the male narrator in Michele Spina's *Sleep: A Utopian Bestiary* (Spina, 2001: 15). The doctors cannot find anything wrong with him, who is in his mid-thirties, and they tell him that eventually he will fall asleep.

"In the meantime he cherished every detail of his future sleep with tireless imagination: the bed, the way the pillows were arranged, the light, the room temperature. Somewhere, he fancied, there was a room ideal for sleep: a place not necessarily very large, but silent and above all enclosed, walled on all sides so that the boredom and the clamour of the world could not intrude" (Op. cit.: 11).

All these meticulously laid out plans aim at the hoped-for sleep, not at dreams. These are of interest only as indicators of sleep. Remembering a dream is significant only insofar as it presupposes that one has slept. The first-person narrator confesses to a mania for sleep and rhetorically asks what could be better than it; for it is "beautiful, restful, and I would even say, wholly satisfying" (Op. cit.: 23). To the compulsive non-sleeper the unattainable assumes unique importance, while he recognises that sleep as such is not much. Psychological introspection makes him wonder whether it was his lack of contentment that is responsible for his insomnia, rather than the other way around. This lack is interpreted in terms of personal destiny. Being left alone, being dropped by others is part of this, his destiny. The theme recurs in the conversations the narrator has with various personages. A prostitute in a brothel claims that if forgetting society and where it is heading towards is the aim of one's sleep, than a deeper sleep – suicide – would be needed. To this option she prefers insomnia. Sleep is associated with transcendence, and so the insomniac believer in the metaphysics of immanence roots his incapability there, as his being incapable of transcendence. Dozing moments are interrupted time and again, for example by a waiter in a café-bar who thumps on the table repeatedly pronouncing a threatening: "No sleeping here" (Spina, 2001: 90). While he cannot find any 'true' sleep, he drops off occasionally for seven to eight minutes only, at the end of which he suddenly finds himself on the floor. Not being able to sleep, the protagonist, who has a penchant for violence, feigns sleep. As he tells two of his drinking companions, who later both fall asleep: "sometimes he pretended to doze off so as to tempt certain simpletons to steal his wallet, thinking he

was sound asleep, in which case he would take the opportunity to smash one or two faces” (Op. cit.: 107). The novel ends after this sleepless night at the break of day.

From the clinical context of the *House of Sleep*, we have come to a surreal world of insomnia, one person’s subjective look at it and, more or less, aimlessly wandering through it. Philosophically, he links his insomnia to a deficiency in his own person. This subjective explanation is far from the stress on social pressure and the modern world of work, so vividly illustrated by Rögglä. Or is it? It could very well be that, beyond the scope of the novels, both factors interact. After all, it is likely that someone trained in foregoing sleep and in acting according to the ideology of activist sleep deprivation, loses the capacity for sleep. Usually, one would not do so up to the point of complete insomnia and perhaps still satisfying a minimal biological need. Still, if falling asleep, as a precondition for sleep, requires one to let go, those trained to be in control will have a hard time allowing for this to happen to them.

### *The Sacralisation of Sleep*

Another insomniac is a protagonist of another novel, Robert Cohen’s *Inspired Sleep* (2002). Quite at the beginning, we are told about a sleeping dog “limbs twitching spasmodically from some febrile dream” (Op. cit.: 12). This impression is not greeted with much enthusiasm by Bonnie, but with a yawn: “She herself had lost the talent for sleep, the nocturnal equipment. Lately four hours in a row was a signal event. More often it was three” (Ibd.). Other than the male café philosopher, whose lack of sleep seems tied to an elaborate ennui towards what appears to be a rather abstract notion of life, to add a critical twist to his problem with transcendence, Bonnie has all sorts of real-life problems to tackle, family- and work-wise. She is a divorced single mother of two and pregnant, but loses her child in the course of events. She also does not manage to finish her doctoral thesis and has to teach to earn her keep; amongst others a student who regularly, of all things, falls asleep in her class.

‘Inspired sleep’, the title of this novel is also, we are told, the name of a two-million dollar lab-based sleep study conducted to test a drug, which is supposed to simultaneously fight motion sickness and enhance REM phases. In this lab, Bonnie finds sleep, “the most glorious sleep of her entire adult life” (Cohen, 2002: 217). For her friend-turned-lover, the lawyer Larry, participant in the study, sleep is an escape:

“I do get impatient during the day, waiting for it to end. All I want is to climb back into bed as early as possible. It’s a nice bed. A king-size. There’s a lot of space to manoeuvre. Lately the law feels confining” (Op. cit.: 259). A cool, rational explanation is sought for these sentiments by Bonnie: “Maybe the dosage is too high?” (Ibd.). Indeed, there seems to be a problem with the new drug. The spider Molloy is in a constant state of sleep, even after having been off the drug for more than two weeks. Bonnie, by contrast, appears to make progress and is seen to contribute to scientific progress as well. Objectifying her, the researcher muses: “Yes, he had chosen well. She would make a fine article, perhaps even a series” (Op. cit.: 278) – the spider, in this case, i.e. the other lab animal, does not.

Bonnie’s progress, based on ‘the blue pills’, takes on a distinctly religious flavour. Given the framework of this study and the utopian-dystopian focus of this chapter, the account of her narrating self deserves being quoted at length:

“As if the nights were not enough, she’d begun to take naps after lunch too. Her bed she laid out like an altar, with fragrant candles, sepulchral music. The white sheets ironed smooth, quilts tucked in tenderly at the corners. The drug had been her sacrament, her ticket of admission; now that her foot was in sleep’s door, and the noise of the streets had clicked of behind her like a banal and raucous movie; now that, hearing the first sonorous blasts of that stately organ, she’d looked up to see the hanging tapestries and vaulted arches, the colored light streaming like holy breath through the stained-glass windows, she had taken to it, the well-slept life, with all the zealotry and fervor of the twice-born. It made her feel humble, susceptible to awe, part of some ancient ceremonious practice of worship. She wanted to be worthy. The more she slept, the worthier she felt. The more stillness she practiced, the faster the pace of her change. It all seemed very complicated – was this courage, she wondered, or its opposite? – and at the same time as simple as erasing a blackboard. This was her time. She had earned it. She had given and given and given. From now on she would be a taker, a recipient. A *bride*. The night her dark groom. She’d climb under the quilt and close her eyes, offering herself like a sacrifice. When she opened them again the world seemed new. She had found a higher calling” (Cohen, 2002: 281 et seq., It. or.).

This paragraph is rich in allusions to religious imagery: The protagonist of this scene is followed in her thoughts, her obsession with sleep. Here sleep becomes sacralised and the ‘worthy’ sleeper partakes of the sacred. Yet, the process of sacralisation, with all the rich detail involved in shaping sleep as a ritual, does not stop at sleep. It extends to the self. The paradox is that in order to receive, in order to become ‘a taker’, one has to sacrifice oneself: Self-sacrifice and self-sacralisation go hand in hand.

Meanwhile, Larry gets more and more obsessed with sleep in his own way and develops an interest in lucid dreaming, for which he gives a revealing reason: “I want

that power you get when you control the dream. Prolong it at will” (Op. cit.: 292). This sheds light on another aspect of control: Dudden sought the control *of* sleep to the point of abolishing it and being totally in control; Larry seeks control *in* sleep, or rather in dream. No matter how different their approaches are otherwise, for both sleep and control are inextricably linked, both represent the active male. Bonnie, on the other hand, gains agency through sacrifice, through letting go and consenting to her loss of control. Her personality development is unmoored from its supposed pharmaceutical basis: At the end, when the study has to be called off, it turns out that Bonnie had been among those who had been given a placebo in order to control for the results of the study.

### *Doing Sleep and Being Undone by It*

The female characters in Japanese writer Banana Yoshimoto’s (2001) *Asleep*, a collection of short stories, do not need any medication, ‘real’ or placebo, to withdraw from the waking state. The book consists of three stories, in all of which sleep plays a role. There is an evident connection between the motifs of sleep and death throughout.

The first story, “Night and Night’s Travelers”, confronts us with the grey zone between waking and sleeping, inhabited by a depressed woman grieving over the loss of her lover, who died in a car accident while she was waiting for him to turn up to a rendez-vous. Although sleep as such is not dealt with in any detail, the narrative makes ample use of sleep-related metaphors. After her lover’s death, the one left behind chooses to sleep in a cold room – the very coldness of which alludes to death or, possibly, the seeking of it. The warm pyjamas, subsequently given to her as a present by her cousin, might be seen to represent the request to stay alive.

The main character of “Love Songs” has a penchant for alcoholic drinks, which she has to help her sleep as she reasons. In her sleep and/or drunken stupor, she hears a singing voice. Her boyfriend tells her that it might be a dead person who wants to get in touch with her. Upon learning that a former female rival in romance has died, they think it could be her. The survivor is taken to a midget, who has the power of bringing her in contact with the dead. A mysterious encounter occurs between the two women in the course of which it becomes clear that the hatred they had shown for each other in fighting over the same man just served to conceal their deep feelings for one another.

Fittingly, sleep assumes the most prominent role in the third story, the one that gives its title to the whole collection, "Asleep". Here, the first-person narrator goes through a phase of hypersomnia in which: "Nothing existed but the free-falling world of sleep" (Yoshimoto, 2001: 107). This causes feelings of regret, 'almost' shame, and fear. Although the narrator says she has surrendered to sleep, this surrender is not complete: When the phone rings, she is able to tell if it is her boyfriend. He is married, and, interestingly, his wife lies in a coma. Pondering the situations of the two women, he declares that all the women he knows are asleep. This is not altogether unrelated to him, though, at least not in the narrator's case. She quit her job for him, who now sustains her. Thus she reflects that "maybe I slept so much simply because I had so much free time" (Op. cit.: 115). At a certain stage, the hypersomniac has ceased to hear the phone, even when it is her boyfriend calling. Another significant person in this story is her friend Shiori. She did some "bizarre work", explained as "sort of like restrained prostitution" (110): "All she had to do was lie beside her customers in bed" (122). These customers were rich, busy people, men, women, foreigners. Shiori had to stay awake, handing them a glass of water, when they suddenly woke up, as they 'always' did. She would also make coffee for them. The customers were exhausted without realising it, and Shiori saw it as her duty not to let them down: "Whatever happens I can't let the person feel lonely" (Yoshimoto, 2001: 124). Sometimes, however, she fell asleep during this work. She said she sensed that she was breathing in her clients' inner 'darkness'. Steger (2004: 396 et seq.) feels that it is not altogether clear whether this kind of service actually exists in today's Japanese society, or whether Yoshimoto has invented it. She thinks it could be one of the paid sociability services, which many young women offer to earn some money. In any case, conveying a feeling of emotional security and belonging is crucial for this practice, whether as such fictional or not. The narrator of the story identifies with Shiori, thinking that she herself absorbs her boyfriend's darkness of exhaustion. Shiori could not sleep in a bed anymore when not on duty, and had to use a hammock instead. After her last visit to her, the narrator falls into a deep sleep, in which for her: "Nothing exists in this world but me and my bed" (Yoshimoto, 2001: 141). Shiori, we learn, died from an overdose of sleeping pills. The surviving narrator finds it unsettling that her sleep becomes ever deeper, even death-like. Would it be better, she asks herself, not to wake up again? Is she possessed by sleep? After having a vision of her boyfriend's wife asking her to take a job, she goes back to sleep. Yet, then she accepts a short-term job as a hostess, which

serves a therapeutic function for her. After this she sleeps a sleep well-deserved and finally watches fireworks with her boyfriend.

In the stories, sleep is a reflection of both life and death. It can also be a gate through which the voice of others is perceived. Hypersomnia appears both physically and metaphorically: The long hours of sleep manifest the other ways in which one leads a sleep-like existence. 'Doing' the sleep of others can lead to being 'undone' by it, as the case of Shiori suggests. By using means devised to bring sleep, she finds death.

### *Sleep and Death*

Austrian writer Robert Schneider's (2001) novel *The Brother of Sleep* (*Schlafes Bruder*) opens with a bold statement: "Who loves does not sleep" (Op. cit.: 7, transl. AF). The first sentence tells us that this is to be the story of a twenty-two year old musician, Elias Alder, who died after having decided not to sleep anymore. The reason for this decision and its lethal consequences is given as well: love, one of the impossible sort. I do not want to focus on the intricacies of this fated love story, the depictions of village life, the nature of the musical genius embodied by the protagonist, or the somewhat cumbersome and calculatedly antiquating style of the novel as a whole. Let us rather reflect upon the line of reasoning engaged in by the musical genius, the thoughts that lead him to his suicidal decision. For him, sleep is a waste, and therefore sin. He fears that in purgatory the time he spent asleep will be counted against him. In sleep you are dead, or at least you are not really alive. He finds confirmation for this in the old adage likening sleep and death to brothers. While these thoughts sound rather abstract, he applies them to his situation: How could a man claim to love his partner, if he only does so during daytime? No, it must be different: Who loves does not sleep. In the course of the novel, it turns out that this is the motto of an itinerant preacher, who visits the village on a Palm Sunday. He calls himself an apostle of love (Schneider, 2001: 127). The end is nigh, and laws – including and particularly those of marriage – do not hold any longer. Thus, he preaches a way of free love and thereby arouses his audience, the members of which have never heard such a sermon before. Liberating as this may sound at first; it comes with a heavy rule, the rule not to rest at all. The preacher announces that one is not allowed to sleep, since in sleep one does not love. He refers to his own example, claiming that he has just gone without sleep for ten days. Having

delivered his motto, he faints. This outcome notwithstanding, the young musical genius, hopelessly in love, cries and sings: “Who loves does not sleep” and so inverts the preacher’s slogan according to which who sleeps does not love. It is when giving a sparkling performance on the organ that Elias decides to give up sleep. He had loved only half-heartedly, since he did so only during the day, which is why God had refused his love to come true. Now, he tells his friend Peter, he wants to live his life awake and anew. His resolve is paired with a double hope: That his new life may bring him Elsbeth’s love and eternal bliss in heaven. He does not listen to his friend’s attempts to make him drop his plan and instead takes belladonna. After several days and nights without sleep, Elias dies – from respiratory paralysis as an effect of the belladonna he had taken.

Extreme sensitivity is at the core of this novel. Musical Elias is so also in a religious sense. He is touched by the preacher’s message, yet his imagination shapes and thereby transforms it. Elias tries to force not God, but love. As if his ever-vigilant love could bring about the reciprocation he seeks as a consequence, a consequence of his own doings. Bonnie sacrificed herself *for* sleep, Elias, through sacrificing sleep, sacrifices himself to attain what no means-end rationality can achieve, love. Instead of love, he finds death; as did Shiori, who managed the sleep of others.

If Schneider’s novel rests on the analogy of sleep and death, an analogy still very much alive in contemporary sleep fiction, this analogy is inverted by the Dutch author Willem Frederik Hermans in his novel *Never to Sleep Again*, translated into English as *Beyond Sleep*. Here, we are invited on a geological expedition on which the protagonist finds his former travel companion: dead. He remembers that his face looked the same when he saw him asleep: “But this here is no sleep. It is: Never to sleep again” (Hermans, 2004: 274, transl. AF). This is exactly what Elias had aspired to, never to sleep again. It is an aspiration only to be fulfilled in death. Who is there to tell whether this is also the fulfilment of love?

### *In the Realm of Sleep: Henri-Frédéric Blanc*

From the realm of death let us go back to the realm of sleep and on to Paris. Here, in Henri-Frédéric Blanc’s (1995) novel *Realm of Sleep* we meet another medical doctor,

yet one who is far less established than Dudden with his sleep clinic. Dr Joseph Cavalcanti is a sleep researcher as well, but unlike his British colleague he seeks sleep and calls about forty pyjamas his own, plus a cat. His treatise on sleep rests in a folder with hundreds of pages, most of which are blank ones, and he aims at taking something out of sleep for his research. Cavalcanti, the lonely academic, falls in love with a woman, whom he meets in a café, and shares his take on life with her, at least for a while. He invents a sleep machine, which allows humans to fall asleep without the use of pharmaceuticals. His invention is marketed for profit-making purposes and his protests lead to his ending up in a mental asylum.

In the course of the novel, Cavalcanti declares the realm of sleep to be his territory and the government of dreams to be his, if only in his bedroom and to his pillow roll. How disappointed is the great explorer of sleep, its self-appointed king, when his sleep machine does not arouse the interest he had anticipated. Cavalcanti's obsession with sleep gets more and more pathological, as he develops a persecution complex: He feels that a Grand Inquisitor is trying to prevent his justified conquest of sleep and consoles himself with the thought that he is too great to become megalomaniac. Unaware of the fact that his invention is to be used for commercial purposes, Cavalcanti attends a conference in Tahiti, where all the colleagues are already fully in the picture of what is going on. One of them defends the machine as modernising sleep: Sleep cannot be exempt from progress; sleepers do not produce anything, nor do they consume anything. As far as the economy goes, sleepers are 'disabled' – but thanks to the machine this is about to change: Now there is 'dream advertising' (s. Blanc, 1995: 142). Soon Cavalcanti finds himself in a hospital, from which he escapes to deliver his speech at the conference in his pyjama. It is a desperate plea for sleep as the best part of life, a part that can only be slept, not theorised about. As he becomes increasingly agitated in his urgency to make people listen to sleep, his speech acquires all signs of full-blown madness. He is sent home to France and after some time at a psychiatric hospital released to go home. It now dawns upon him that sleep is indeed paradise, but that he allowed the merchants to enter it. After a vendetta against these merchants and their factory, he is hospitalised again and later leaves Paris to return to his native village. In his epilogue to Sonia, the woman he had met, he writes about true joy as emptiness, like a dreamless sleep. He has given up his dreams of being a great explorer, a hero and rescuer of humankind, and now contents himself with 'ordinary' life.



Cavalcanti is portrayed with sympathetic irony. After all, his intentions have been good ones. The marketing of his sleep machine was a consequence not intended by him. Yet, his attempts at fighting this commercial conquest of sleep have proved futile. The utopia of sleep, for which he had worked so hard by sleeping so hard, was not meant to be. Still, the sleep marketers will not necessarily prevail. Their dystopian doings, conquering sleep to make it profitable by turning sleepers into consumers, do not have the last word in this novel. Cavalcanti has learnt to enjoy the natural world around him and thus his being awake just as much as his sleep. He has parted from his obsession and awaits Sonia's visit. Who is there to tell if she will ever come?

### *A Glimmer of Hope for Utopian Sleep?*

Overall, it seems that dystopian images of sleep or lack of it outweigh the utopian ones. Perhaps insomnia is a concrete dystopia, present in the everyday lives of so many. There are some utopian impulses, though, as well, although they are in danger of falling prey to an obsession with sleep, as we have seen in Cavalcanti's case. Bonnie's sleep- and self-sacralising actions are on the brink of being obsessive, too. Perhaps, this is due to the longing which is elicited by utopian imagination. If you paint sleep as a utopia, you get easily obsessed with it – and whether the sacralisation of sleep will lead to a society with reduced risks of insomnia and other sleep trouble seems questionable. What is this utopian hope a hope for, though? Is sleep the new sex? Maybe it has always been for the older generations:

"... the sheer sensuality of somnolence is a secret the elderly keep from the young. Sleep and sex have bed and darkness in common and, according to the age group, they inspire a curiously similar yearning. The harassed middle aged are in love with sleep in the same way as the young are in love with love; chastity is the torment of youth, insomnia of age, and at neither stage of life does it ever seem possible to get enough of what you want" (Alvarez, 1996: 56).

I would argue, however, that being in love with sleep is not necessarily restricted to the elderly, starting with the middle-aged. Furthermore, love of sleep and love of love are not on different levels, segregated by age, either. Dudden's patient Terry was in love with sleep when a student, although not because of sleep as such but because of the happy dreams it gave him. Also, seeking sleep and seeking love may just as well go

hand in hand. And who does not know of foregoing sleep for the sake of love or of sleepless nights due to a lost love?

The motif of sleep as lover or surrogate lover is an ancient one (s. Windau, 1998: 32). And it can still be found in contemporary fiction, not only in autobiographical accounts like Alvarez'. It is an old, mid-Western American man, who in Jonathan Franzen's *The Corrections* opens his eyes

"to the fact that (a) sleep was a woman and (b) hers were comforts that he was under no obligation to refuse. For a man who all his life had fought off extracurricular napping like any other unwholesome delight, the discovery was life-altering ... A Pax Somnis is descended on the household. Alfred's new lover soothed whatever beast was left in him. How much easier than raging or sulking he found it to simply close his eyes. Soon everybody understood that he had an invisible mistress ... Sleep was the ideally work-compatible girl he ought to have married in the first place. Perfectly submissive, infinitely forgiving, and so respectable you could take her to church and the symphony and the St. Jude Repertory Theater. She never kept him awake with her tears. She demanded nothing and in return for nothing gave him everything he needed to do a long day's work. There was no mess in their affair, no romantic osculation, no leakages or secretions, no shame" (Franzen, 2001: 282).

Sleep is functionalised and anthropomorphised here. Is this truly a utopia of sleep, or is it not rather a temporary respite from a life otherwise, if not dystopian, at least pretty bleak? It is still not sleep in its own right that we are looking at. This is why Alfred can toy with the idea of having married Sleep, the 'work-compatible girl', instead of his apparently not so compatible wife. This 'girl' knows its place and time, more or less. Its topos is well-defined – which is why there is one thing which it is not: u-topia. Or, to paraphrase a word once coined about God: The U-topia that is is not U-topia.

If the form of the novel is an expression of 'transcendental homelessness' (Lukács, 1920: 23 et seq.), the sleep novels we have examined can be seen to express a quasi-transcendental sleeplessness. Yoshimoto's short stories fit the same description. The reasons for this state of affairs, of our being the sleep-deprived, sleep-longing and sleep-incapacitated humans we have become, are manifold. And yet, we are not completely deprived and incapacitated, we are still longing. If we transform the intuition of our longing, what it does to us and what do with it, into theoretical thought, we can take on board Michael E. Gardiner's (2006: 2) concept of 'everyday utopianism' as

"a theoretical position that imagines utopia not as an ideal society located in some romanticized past 'Golden Age', or in some distant imagined and perfected future understood in a 'blueprint' or 'social engineering' sense, but as a series

of forces, tendencies and possibilities that are immanent in the here and now, in the pragmatic activities of daily existence”.

For our purposes, however, this concept stands in need of some modification. While we do not seek to restrict sleep to night-time, we will have to take into account that for the majority of people sleep happens at night. Therefore, the utopian thinking envisaged here should be concerned with ‘everynight/day’ utopias, or as I would prefer to say: sleep-utopian horizons. As such, they typically are not about ‘pragmatic activities’ but about a state in which activity is temporarily suspended. It is this suspension that points beyond the here and now of our social reality.

‘Fictionalised wake-up calls’ is the heading of this chapter. Most of the wake-up calls assembled here are of a different nature than the ones we have listened to previously. The fictionalised calls direct our attention to the sleep we do not get, to how and why we are so deprived. Many of them invite us to seek sleep, and those that do not do so literally warn us of what happens if we do not give in to sleep. These calls wake us up to sleep and ask us not to listen to the wake-up calls proper that have determined our physical as well as metaphorical soundscapes, past and present.

We should not use the utopian longing present even in dystopian fictional accounts to construct a positive utopia of sleep. According to Adorno (1994: 207), materialism secularised the Jewish prohibition of idols by rejecting positive portrayals of utopia. In this lies its negativity. At the same time it is at its most materialist where it agrees with theology: In the longing for the resurrection of the flesh. The sleep-utopian thought, which I propose, does not restrict this longing to waking flesh, but is mindful of dormant bodies as well. On the other hand or possibly dialectically related to this reconfigured utopian longing, we have Ernst Bloch’s (1989: 249) insight that the Godless poem of poetry, the call for perfection needs to leave poetry and the aesthetic anticipation in order to become practical in and for society. Therefore it is time to leave these fictionally inspired reflections on sleep behind. There remains one more call to make, though, the ‘Last Call’.

## 10 Last Call

We have come a long way on our journey through the sleep disciplines and their wake-up calls and, finally, reached the 'last call'. Apart from the author's modesty, there is a substantive reply to the question why this is not and cannot be a 'final call'. We have come across this reply already, in the context of our discussion of materialised wake-up calls. It is to be found in Christopher Tilley's statement (1991: 172): "Understanding of this material, any 'data' in the human sciences does not conclude. It just stops when we get bored or do not have anything else to say." So what remains to be said? And where is it that we stop at? In order for us to tell, we will have to recapitulate the calls we have heard and assemble them in concert.

### *Calls in Concert: A Summary*

We have seen that Religious Studies, in those cases in which it has bothered to concern itself with sleep at all, has had little to say about those of its aspects that do not relate to dreams. In order to draw a preliminary map of sleep in religion and history, we have found a helpful classificatory device in Marcel Mauss's concept of body techniques. For a social theory of sleep we would like to complement this concept with a notion of sleep as need. All needs and sleep needs in particular, however, are social constructions; at least this is how we happen to encounter and experience them as embodied and meaning-constructing beings. This call to take needs seriously is where we have left the general discussion, as our main interest in this study has been with sleep *disciplines* and the ways in which they are ideologically constructed, constructed as material methods upon and in fact intermingled with constructions of needs.

We have faced the realities of sleep deprivation: Although it is analytically distinct from sleep discipline, it serves to remind us of the more coercive aspects of the latter. The social distribution of sleep is determined by gender and other factors, such as age and sexual orientation, speaking of which also proves our point that not all sleepers are equal, and some do not figure at all in media discourses, including those discourses – applying the term liberally – that pride themselves on their scientific foundations. We can describe processes of both medicalisation and healthicisation of sleep in society, and given the growing interest in dormant matters, we may even observe what Simon Williams has called a 'sleepicisation' of society. Having gained an elementary understanding of what sleep is medically, we have then pondered the question whether we live in a sleep-deprived society. This is a contested issue and far

from resolved. However, we can safely assume that what we live in is a sleep-disciplined society. Therapies for more and better, i.e. restorative, sleep consist of (more) sleep disciplinary measures to be taken, as they ask sleepless and other problem sleepers to discipline their bodies and minds. They interpellate useful and fit subjects, sometimes by borrowing their rhetoric from the ideology that has done so much to constitute subjects, Christian religious ideology. Religious rhetoric is not to be confused with a religious message, though, and I do not think that the message of contemporary popular sleep advice is generally a religious one; except for the sort of specialist texts represented by evangelicalism and other avowedly religious players.

The exploration of biblical wake-up calls has taken the Gethsemane scene, the primal scene of Christian vigilance and sleep discipline, as its starting point. It has made us think about the structure of this type of vigilance, with God as ultimate never-sleeping Subject. From there, we have gone on to listen to the wake-up calls of the 'Old Testament' and its wisdom literature. This has raised the question how sleep discipline, (work) ethics and capitalism or its absence are related.

Anthropological wake-up calls have alerted us to how questions of body/flesh and soul have been relevant in constructing sleep. Different perspectives on sleeping subjects, on their bodies and souls, open up different ideas of what it means to be human. For the sleeping/waking subject it makes a difference how his/her body and soul are seen as being related to one another. From such questions of duality and dualism, we have gone on to witness how sleepers have been condemned as slothful. Sloth has even been a matter of papal decree, and thus of ultimate pastoral power. It became once again an issue when sloth was seen as resisting the idea/l of calculating one's time, as it has been in the manuals of moral theology defining the true essence of being human as being an active and productive, in short: a useful, subject.

Ascetic wake-up calls have introduced us to a range of sleep disciplines, from extreme examples to more moderate versions. From the stylite on his [or her] pillar through monastic communities to ascetic Protestants: Sleep has been seen as a problem requiring practical measures to be taken and put in its, usually lowly, place. Exemplary virtuoso practices, rules for communal living, and disciplines for each and every one of the faithful have been developed to tackle this problem by controlling and subjecting sleep-prone bodies; bodies and their minds or souls that have been constituted as subjects, subject to wakefulness.

In our excursus on contemporary religious sleep discipline, we have focussed on a recent US evangelical example of self-help literature, the *Bible Cure for Sleep Disorders*. Similar in many respects to 'secular' sleep manuals of the popular variety

and equally drawing on the findings of sleep research, the normative dimension is clearly religious, and more specifically: biblical, here. Literal readings of both sleep research and scripture are combined in the text, which we have investigated. Far from having left for good, the voice of the ultimate Subject, God, calls out to the problem sleepers. The discipline prescribed as necessary for finding the right amount and type of sleep is – still or again – a religious discipline in this text, and so are its wake-up calls.

From texts in the usual sense of the word we then turned to material culture and materialised wake-up calls. The spirit of vigil/ance has manifested itself in the things that call us to waking and wakefulness. Serving this purpose, bells have been a prime auditory as well as visual example of artifacts, whether based in monasteries and churches or factories and towns. Robert Owen's 'silent monitors' have been among those things invented and manufactured to discipline workers on the job through material visual devices. Today, the soundscape created by alarm clocks is one in which we wake and sleep until sleep is interrupted. New devices have been designed to call us to get and stay up, exemplified by 'Clocky'. We need to take seriously the extra-textual world with its things. Things, once made, find peculiar ways of acting (back) on us. Thus, it is not only texts, but things as well that call on us. There is a certain irony in the fact that a thing – of which we rarely think as a subject, recent theoretical approaches notwithstanding – acts as Subject and addresses us to be vigilant subjects. This irony, however, is not to be shirked, as it is most real in its efficient consequences.

So-called real life and fiction do at times feed into each other. The realities of sleep deprivation, insomnia, and other forms of going without sufficient and/or restorative sleep have been represented in works of fiction. Standardised utopian sleep has ceased being utopian, and present-day sleep-learning programmes remind us of Aldous Huxley's 'hypnopaideia'. Not only by self-help manuals encouraging us to fix sleep, but also by fictionalised wake-up calls, do we become acutely aware of sleep through its absence, its being in a non-time and a non-place. Institutions like sleep clinics and individual as well as collective methods of ritualising and sacralising sleep all bear witness to the fact that we have a problem with simply letting sleep be. Letting sleep be has become a utopian idea in a 24/7 society. We can preserve the utopian moment, even if for the most part only negatively through the dystopian pictures of sleep that contemporary fiction presents us with.

### *Sleep Disciplines' Past and/in Present*

Medieval sleep has been characterised as something that was to be fled or avoided in excess by monastics as well as by lay-people, along with the observation that while the former were motivated to do so by asceticism, for the latter night and thus sleep were times of heightened danger and therefore it was self-preservation pure and simple why so-called common people were not inclined to sleep too much (Wittmer-Butsch 1990; Ekirch 2001; 2006). In a sense we have been concentrating on an elite discourse when pondering ascetic wake-up calls. The issue of danger has received comparatively short shrift in the course of our reflections. However, this has not been done out of disrespect for the 'common people' nor from a philosophical perspective according to which it is always the elites that shape the [high] culture. Yet, I think that the Marxian insight that the thoughts of the ruling classes are at all times the ruling thoughts is worth considering – even if it does not apply to all times and places. In a less presupposing manner, our interest has been in how an ascetic ideal once reserved for virtuoso elites has been disseminated and appropriated, and thus also changed, beyond its original social and class basis. In other words: In a night world, which has ceased being dangerous, we resort to the ascetic imperative or its functional equivalents to motivate us to do sleep and, more specifically, to subject us to our sleep disciplines. In this way, certain aspects of *Agrypnia* have lived on. *Agrypnia* as the hegemonic sleep discourse of medieval times, held up as an idea in Roman Catholicism well into the twentieth century (Hergemöller, 2002: 35; 73), was motivated by ideals as distinct from another as, to follow Hergemöller's categories, self-control or *Apatheia*, perennial prayer, fighting demons, the sanctity of the midnight hour, the ideal of the martyr who does not shed his/her blood, angelic life, and the awaiting of Christ's return. Strange as many of these ideals may sound to the ear of a contemporary, possibly non-religious, sleeper, the practice of breaking or foregoing one's sleep is not at all. This is why Hergemöller has been able to conclude that from an ascetic, monastic principle agrypnic sleep-deprivation has turned into the general principle of life in western European societies of consumer capitalism (Op. cit.: 170). The line of continuity drawn here is visible only to the eye that is willing to suspend its focus on subjective meanings, an eye that decides to focus on material bodily practices. Of course, we could go on arguing about the myriads of reasons people have given for why they forgo sleep. Still, is it not an astonishing fact that throughout the centuries and up to our very present, people have chosen not to give in to their perceived needs and felt desires? This astonishment does not have to discard all concern with meaning as meaningless. After

all, the rational control of time that has figured so eminently in justifying sleep discipline is a factor of attributed meaning. In this, we can find a continuity of meaning *and* practice, even if in so many other respects the differences in meanings seem to overshadow the identity of practices. The link between the monastics of history – and I would like to include those of our time, as the presentation of my argument may have suggested that monasticism was a thing of the past – and ourselves can be established through a consideration of time discipline:

“In Western societies we have imposed the monastic schedule on ourselves, our children and their educators. That is, we have adopted this reified, abstracted time and its rationalized control as an educational strategy. In the sixth century, when the Benedictine monks first introduced fixed and preset times for each of their activities, this was a revolutionary practice. Today it is neither questioned as a practice nor doubted as a principle: it is simply taken for granted. It has become the inescapable reality for twentieth-century Western education” (Adam, 1995: 65).

There is a faint echo of Weber’s famous lines about the inevitability of the iron cage or the steel-hard casing in Adam’s statement. The latter’s ‘inescapable reality’ does not only apply to time discipline in general, but also to sleep discipline more specifically. How are we to reconcile this inescapable reality with our sleep needs and desires? Complying with the former tends to sacrifice the latter. When the sacrifice becomes a habit, we may lose the ability to let sleep be. The point is that this resulting incapacity goes well beyond the sleep pathologies attributable to individual subjects. Therefore, the remedy cannot consist in merely individual therapies. Prescribing solely individual therapies for an ill that is social contributes to strategies of avoidance. It blames the ill-fitting, non-compliant subject or his/her symptoms in order to avoid having to engage in a critique of a society and culture which systematically produce those subjects. The case of Dr Cavalcanti may serve to illustrate this. Yet, social therapies are not the solution, either; not if they restrict themselves to transferring what has been tried and tested on individuals to the social or societal level; not if they use the products of utopian imagination to reify utopia, sleep, and sleepers, and to make the latter more useful for an otherwise unchanged capitalist society. Sleep, to be sure, is not the key to revolution, but a revolution might bring about new chances for changed sleep: Only in a truly class-less society could we overcome the divisions between classes of sleepers, just as only in a society that has effectively deconstructed the labels of gender and of sex, would the domination enacted through sexed and gendered sleep be no more. Imagining class-less and sex/gender-less societies may overstretch the utopian imagination of some readers. Returning to sleep as such, we are yet again confronted with a negative definition, with a being defined by her/his lack. This being and its society are not part of utopian, unreal imagination, but they constitute defining



elements of our dystopian real and quite non-fictitious present, the present of sleepless human beings.

"The sleepless are on call at any hour, unresistingly ready for anything, alert and unconscious at once" (Adorno, 1974: 38).

Despite a possible rehabilitation of the sleeper in some corners of the sleep-conscious world, the dominant and ruling figure still seems to be the sleepless person. Resistance is not found in her. Those whom Adorno sees as being on call at any hour, do they not resemble the Foucauldian bodies ruled by docility and utility? Maybe there is a potential in sleep then, a potential for refusal? Certainly, there are signs of a new sensitivity for sleep, also and particularly in contexts of work. Yet, do they point towards the liberation of sleepers or rather towards their optimised use and self-use? Maybe, there really is a change in sight. Perhaps the change is in that the sleeper herself, once scolded for her uselessness, becomes a utility (e.g. the creative work-place napper). I do not think that this is desirable change, though.

Sleep is generally seen as loss or at least absence of control. If one subscribes to this view, therefore, sleep has to be tamed, fenced-in and cut-down on. An alternative view of sleep seems to have appeared in discussions of lucid dreaming. Yet, how much of an alternative does it really represent? We are told by some of its proponents that "Lucid dreaming offers the promise of enhanced control over dreams" and that control is "the ability to determine or influence the course of events" (Levitan/LaBerge 1993). In other words, it is about doing in sleep exactly what has been excluded from sleep in the absence-of-control model. The re-definition of sleep implied in this move, no matter how much it might be experienced as liberating in other respects, does not liberate its subjects from an inherited coercion: the urge towards vigilant action. Rather than emancipating from the spirit of vigil/ance, the latter is carried to its extreme: Sleep itself, lucid-dreaming sleep, becomes the vigil. If the vigil is totalised in this manner, does it still make any sense to speak of it? If everything is vigil/ance, nothing is vigil/ance anymore. However, so far this is only a scenario. So far the sleeping worlds we find ourselves in do not seem to be densely populated with completely controlling (controlled?) lucid dreamers. So far there is still hope for resisting the vigil and for re-claiming a realm free from control. Dreamless sleep. Before death. This hope, however, is constantly in danger of being reified. Thus we have to ask whether the potential for refusal should or could be transformed into a

positive doctrine of sleep and sleepers, a spelt-out sleep ethics, or whether this very act of spelling it out would destroy the potential of sleep as refusal. In response, I would like to refer to the famous last sentence of the paragraph in Adorno's *Minima Moralia*, that is in the same paragraph as the above quotation on sleepless people: "Wrong life cannot be lived rightly" (Adorno, 1974: 39). Of course, there is a good deal of exaggeration in this and similar statements by Adorno. He cultivated exaggeration as a theoretical gesture, through which thinking itself becomes a gesture (Düttmann 2001). Adorno claimed that in his days only exaggeration could serve as medium of truth (Adorno, 1997e: 567). To him, every image of the human being (*Menschenbild*) is ideology except for the negative one (1997a: 67). Like some of the seminars held at the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research after its return from exile, this text could be seen as an exercise in developing the evil eye (*den bösen Blick*) without which one could not become sufficiently aware of the *contrainte sociale* (1997b: 177). As far as the strategy of exaggeration is concerned, Foucault comes close to Adorno in that he "paints the picture of a totally normalized society, not because he believes our present society is one, but because he hopes we will find the picture threatening. He could hope for this effect on us only if we have *not* been completely normalized" (Hoy, 1986: 14). Althusser, by contrast, does not look very much like an advocate of exaggeration, especially not in his scientistically inclined statements. Yet, when he refers to his model of interpellation as his 'little theoretical theatre' (Althusser, 1971: 174), we can find a touch of the exaggerating thought as gesture in this.

We have to refuse setting out a plan for how the refusal of being named and claimed would look like. Thinking allows the utopian moment to grow by refraining from objectivating and reifying itself into utopia and thus sabotaging its becoming real (Adorno, 1997f: 798). 'The plan', we could say, is always on the other side. On this side, there is the sleeper's abstention from action and refusal of self-recognition: not reacting to the last wake-up call which is addressed to oneself. At a more self-reflexively diagnostic level we can remember that Simon Williams, who has greatly contributed to putting sleep on the sociological agenda, has not stopped at suggesting the diagnosis of a sleepicisation of society, but added the dimension of a sleepicisation of sociology of which he himself would "stand accused" (Williams, 2005: 165). So does the author of this study, and several more will do in future.

Looking back at the general line of our argument, it is appropriate to bring back in explicitly our concern with ideology:

"Understanding the system of ideology that operates in one's own society is made difficult by two factors: (i) one's consciousness is itself a product of that system, and (ii) the system's very success renders its operations invisible, since one is so consistently immersed in and bombarded by its products that one comes to mistake them (and the apparatus through which they are produced and disseminated) for nothing other than 'nature'" (Lincoln, 2005: 397: Thesis no. 10).

That sleep disciplines are not simple facts of nature but methods of controlling and subjecting actually and potentially bodies, and that they are ideological products the functioning of which can be interpreted in terms of the interpellation of sleeping and waking subjects have been the guiding assumptions in our effort at de-naturalising the ways sleep has been dealt with.

### *Theorising Sleep Disciplines as Interpellative Ideologies*

Sleep, of course, has to do with nature, and sleep disciplines are ways of mastering nature. As sleepers we are always natural beings as well as social ones, but the natural part of our selves appears to us in its social forms. Even the vocabulary of sleep medicine and science is one of these social forms. This is why we are to be suspicious whenever an unmediated, direct access to sleep as a natural given is claimed, by whatever authorities. Therefore, the inverted commas around 'nature' are justified as a memento against biologicistic essentialism. Our theoretical choice confirms our insisting on the constructed character of sleep disciplines. Gilles Deleuze (1992) has claimed that from a disciplinary society we have moved on to a society of control. However, are these two types of society as distinct from one another in reality as they appear to be in analytical terms? We can argue that even a society of control would still be in need of disciplines. Furthermore, if we think of disciplines instituted by the church and its adherents as we have done throughout this study, we will find that what Deleuze has put down on the side of control can be just as well, if not better, recorded for discipline: His point is that not only has the enterprise or corporation assumed the role of the factory, but also that continuous training is replacing the institution of the school and permanent control is succeeding the examination. The religious disciplines we have been examining have done just that: Actually and potentially sleeping bodies have had to be trained continuously according to the spirit of vigil/ance. Proper

behaviour in line with this spirit has been a matter of permanent control, whether it is external or internalised and acting as self-control. Therefore, we can interpret sleep disciplines as manifestations of disciplinary as well as of control societies. As such, they bear witness to the fact that the influence of discipline/s is far from being a thing of the past. Yet, Deleuze's intervention may be fruitfully applied to our analysis, in that it reminds us of the adaptive character of disciplines. They are not methods fixed once and for all but malleable and even capable of disguising themselves and posing as the more benign technologies of the self. This is not to say that all technologies of the self can be simply reduced to disciplines. It is, however, to alert our suspicion to the true character of such technologies, based on the experience that at least some technologies act as disciplines and some technologies of the self prove themselves to be self-disciplines. In some respects, our present social reality is much harsher than the past of disciplines and self-disciplines: Contemporary prisons in the US, for example, are more repressive than encouraging the inmates' self-regulating as Foucault's disciplinary model of the Benthamite panopticon had it. Whether "such prisons epitomize one aspect of postfordism" (Fraser, 2003: 166) and whether postfordism is an accurate description for the state of society we find ourselves in, cannot be conclusively decided in this study. What Nancy Fraser indirectly reminds us of is that there are ways of dealing with the body that are far more coercive and externally directed than disciplines have been. If we accept that in the long run the most successful form of discipline is self-discipline, we can see on the other hand how torture is employed in the short term. The setting of torturers inflicting sleep deprivation on their victims is therefore as far as it gets from the comparative longevity of both discipline and its disciples. What Fraser (Op. cit.: 168) directly states is that the new postfordist care of the self with its self-management duties is continuous with the fordist concern with self-regulation – and thus, we might say, with the preoccupation of the disciplines.

What Foucault shares with Marx, Adorno and Althusser is the critique of identity (Demirovic, 2008: 186), what he shares more specifically with Althusser is the priority of institutionally regulated and ritualised practices over thought (Lindner, 2008: 205) and the idea of subjectification as subjection – in Lacan that is subjection under the Law of the Father (Op. cit.: 212, fn. 12). Althusser praised Foucault's study of madness as one of the medical ideological state apparatus (s. Schmidt, 2008: 248), and both *Discipline and Punish* and the first volume of the *History of Sexuality* shared

Althusser's concern with how one is trained in a morality maintaining the economic order or being at least compatible with it (Op. cit.: 251). Of course, the moralities of the Israelites, or the monks, or the Puritans are not simply still ours, and neither are the realities of late capitalism to be confused with their respective economic orders. Due to these differences, we can speak of the social worlds they have inhabited as 'other' societies. Precisely as such they invite us to make sense of our own:

"The ideological products and operations of other societies afford invaluable opportunities to the would-be student of ideology. Being initially unfamiliar, they do not need to be denaturalized before they can be examined. Rather, they invite and reward critical study, yielding lessons one can put to good use at home" (Lincoln, 2005: 397: Thesis no. 11).

The theme of discipline/s reminds us of one of the reasons why people may fear sleep: After all, sleep means loss of control. Perhaps the sleepers will one day be the last remaining anarchists: Those who indulge in their Oblomovism; those who negate the 'occidental commando of activity' not only when they listen to certain music and see this negation made manifest in a waking dream like Hans Castorp did on the *Magic Mountain*; and those who are inclined to enjoy the Sapphic 'sleep of enchantment' – even in a world that is to a large extent a disenchanted one. This sounds romanticist, and maybe that is exactly what it is. However, it is not a nostalgic position: The episodes of sleep disciplines unfolded in the previous chapters have not been told to mourn a sleep we have lost. Nor have they been told to make us feel miserable and helplessly in thrall to ideology. Granted, I cannot make out a non-ideological, properly 'scientific' position and/or a revolutionary proletariat with a vibrant vanguard party paving its glorious way and offering an alternative ideology. And it is true that while Althusser's essay on ideology focuses on the constitution of the individual/subject, there is but little in it about the class/subject and the ways in which it is being formed, let alone the ways in which it would form itself and act in struggle.<sup>133</sup> Althusser certainly is not much help for grasping the moments of Gramscian 'good sense' that evade the dominant ideology (Lovell 1980). Surely, people have shown 'good sense' in dealing with sleep as well: I am not claiming that our everyday lives are sites of the

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<sup>133</sup> Robert P. Resch (1989: 534 et seq.) defends Althusser by claiming that "far from eliminating human agency from history ..., Althusser's concept of ideology provides the basis for a new understanding of the relationship between theory and practice with its new theory of practice or social subjectivity". And: Althusser "does not, as he is so often accused, thereby remove the subject behind or beyond the mechanisms of interpellation ..., he also insists that there is no practice (including science) except through subjects, that subjectification is the precondition of all power and any practice". Unfortunately, the price Resch pays for extolling Althusser's virtues is Foucault-bashing.

ideology of sleep discipline and its interpellations, and nothing else. Yet, the ‘good sense’ of sleepers and wakers requires another and a different story, and possibly someone else to tell it. One of the points of criticism raised by Axel Honneth (1994) is Althusser’s reduction of social praxis to instrumental actions, with the party as substitute for class consciousness and experience. To a certain extent we may be found guilty of this charge as well. However, the focus on sleep discipline as ideology qua interpellation has demanded such an instrumentalist bias. It is not claimed that there is nothing non-instrumentalist to observe in the social world. And text as well as, once more, map is not territory. Different types of map are made for exploring different types of territory.

Paul Ricoeur (1994) has noticed that Althusser and Foucault both want to get rid of the ‘myth of man’. In his critique of Althusser it seems that he tries to resuscitate this very myth, which to him is much more than that; at least he speaks out in favour of a philosophical anthropology. He problematises that we can only speak of ideology in its own language and suggests an anthropological solution – which from an Althusserian point of view would have to be ideological itself. Ricoeur is obviously uncomfortable with a situation in which “what we might be when separated from ideology is completely unknown” (Op. cit.: 64). Instead of siding with his anthropological position, I propose to impatiently bear this ignorance and to dare speaking of miscognition, even if we do not know what recognition would look like. For Althusser’s theory of ideology it is not so much an anthropological but a theological model that is crucial, and that he chose religious ideology as his example for explaining how interpellative ideology works is due to the structure of his argument (Boer 2007).

### *No Way Out?*

The relevance of religion and theology for Althusser’s model had been already seen by Judith Butler (1995), who has blended in her critiques of identity and identity politics with her questioning of the all-encompassing grip of interpellation. Butler encourages “a willingness *not* ‘to be’ – a critical desubjectivation – in order to expose the law as less powerful than it seems” (Op. cit.: 25; It. or.). In the course of her argument, an alternative way of thinking is set out:

“we might reread ‘being’ as precisely that potentiality that remains unexhausted by any particular interpellation. Such a failure of interpellation might well undermine the capacity of the subject to ‘be’ in a self-identical sense, but it may well mark the path towards a more open, even more ethical, kind of being, one of or for the future” (Op. cit.: 26).

Treating this path is beyond the scope of this study, but to those interested in such other kinds of being it may well be worth discovering next. The path differs from the combined project of ideology critique, the critique of religion and cultural criticism in which we have been engaged in throughout this study. Yet, in calling into question the eternal successfulness of interpellation, the path thus marked transports and transforms the critical content of our explorations. More specifically, we have been enabled to question the naturalness of human subjectivity and its’ having been being built on the original coalition between individual vigilance and the vigilance of one’s co-watchers (Sloterdijk, 1993: 337).

One of the starting points for this inquiry has been the conviction that the Marxian critique of religion has not been completed in social reality. The main reason for this assumption has got nothing to do with new religions or the resurgence of old ones. In fact, my line of reasoning is not necessarily affected by whatever position one may wish to take in those debates. One recent example is Ivan Varga’s (2005) claim that the body is the new sacred, or at least ‘a’ sacred in post- and hypermodernity. If this truly was the case, practices of fetishising, sacralising and ritualising sleep could be understood as enactments of a relationship with this new sacred, the body. I am, however, sceptical whether Varga’s thesis is viable. It seems to be based on the idea of the ineradicability of the sacred: Once one entity or idea has stopped functioning as the sacred, we simply attach the label to another one; and we can even multiply it to such an extent that the number of sacreds seems to be infinite. This approach, like some of its other functionalist predecessors, does without self-confessed believers in the body-sacred. In short, I think that a functionalist approach needs to be based on a substantive one – as it tacitly always is by definition; we need to lay down our cards on the table, as intellectual honesty and self-reflexivity require us to do.

The romanticist and humanist in Marx (1957) spoke of ‘plucking the living flower’. Our theoretical melange of Foucault, Althusser, Adorno and the others we have included in our conversation has not brought us any closer to finding this flower; more than anything else it may have persuaded us of the pointlessness of looking for it. For Marx, the critique of religion had already plucked the imaginary flowers of religion on the chain of material social reality. Not the flower/s *per se*, the chain is what has

interested us. Sleep discipline is an analogy of this chain: We have lost the decorative flowers of religion and its cover-up, but the chain of sleep discipline is still with us. We, or most of us, now bear it without religious imagination or the consolation of religion, but we still bear it. Marx's idea was that we should liberate us from the chain – as long as we have not done so, the project of a critique of religion has not been completed.

We still move around the sun of utility, whether determined by structures, individual and collective others, or ourselves. We are still projectionists, even if we have ceased thinking in terms of an essence, which we project onto something else. Perhaps there is nothing wrong with that, as long as we are open about it. With a society that disciplines us into disciplining ourselves and our potentially and actually dormant bodies, however, there is quite a bit wrong. The messianic power of sleep is but a weak one. What is at stake is not so much the slumber we have or have not lost, it is the sleep we have not gained yet. And perhaps we never will. Anyway, the struggle continues.



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